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Fashioning labour rights?

Understanding the efforts of transnational stakeholders
in the responsible fashion and apparel (RFA) movement
post-Rana Plaza, Bangladesh

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented is entirely my own.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. F. Hanlon', is written above a horizontal line.

Mary F Hanlon

24 September 2019

Date

Abstract

In the wake of the 2013 Rana Plaza building collapse in Savar, Bangladesh, transnational stakeholders and stakeholder groups working within the global movement for responsible fashion and apparel (RFA) mobilised in extraordinary ways, developing and implementing a spectrum of strategies and actions aimed at supporting garment worker safety in Bangladesh. While some focused on building infrastructure, lobbying companies and governments to improve workplace standards through policy and legislation in the country, others sought to improve voluntary corporate standards. These stakeholders make up part of a global movement of individuals and organisations engaged in efforts which aim to both challenge and disrupt conventional systems of fashion and apparel production and consumption with respect to social and environmental issues.

Long before Rana Plaza collapsed, transnational stakeholders engaged in efforts directed at improving labour conditions for garment workers in Bangladesh. In this thesis, I examine how RFA movement stakeholders mobilised post-Rana Plaza and consider how fashion was leveraged across the movement as a tool to support the labour rights of garment workers in Bangladesh. Findings stem from data gathered through 42 qualitative interviews conducted with elite RFA movement stakeholders based in Bangladesh, Canada, Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as a website analysis of the UK-based ‘pro-fashion’ transnational project Fashion Revolution (FashRev), which operates as an analytic entry point into the wider RFA movement. Captured within the thesis are the views of artists, activists, corporate social responsibility advisors, designers, educators, government officials, and key individuals working at local and international organisations, all connected to fashion-related efforts aimed at supporting labour rights in Bangladesh. By separating research participants into four distinct categories (fashion-based, labour rights organisation-based, industry-based and other-related stakeholders), differences and similarities between stakeholder groups emerge.

Within this thesis I show how RFA movement stakeholders, despite working in diverse and divergent capacities, share a theory of change regarding aspirations to support labour rights. The thesis also reveals that across the movement, stakeholders

leverage similar tools to achieve their aims. Operating within an *information provision reform pathway*, research participants understood knowledge exchange and resource sharing as central in their efforts to better support garment workers. Calling for reform through voluntary and legislative means, stakeholders leveraged fashion, strategic partnerships, and digital technologies to assist them in their endeavours. Responding to the collapse, the majority of transnational efforts mimicked previous strategies and tactics. The thesis reveals that there is more nuance to efforts at work within the movement, as some stakeholders engaged with fashion as a tool for disruption to challenge conventional understandings related to fashion and apparel production and consumption under the logic of capitalism.

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I hope what follows honours the workers who lost their lives to Rana Plaza, and that these pages contribute in some small way to conversations and debates relating to transnational efforts aimed at redressing inequalities across the global fashion and apparel industry.

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Abbreviations

Acronyms	Name
18MR	18 Million Rising
The Accord	Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh
The Alliance	Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety
BFC	British Fashion Council
CCC	Clean Clothes Campaign
CIC	Community Interest Company
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
DIY	Do-it-yourself
EYD2015	European Year for Development
FashRev	Fashion Revolution
The Gap	Gap Inc.
GJM	Global justice movement
ICT	Information and communication technology
Zara	Inditex
IOSH	Institution of Occupational Safety and Health
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILRF	International Labour Rights Forum
MSN	Maquila Solidarity Network
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment
MFA	Multifibre Arrangement
MSI	Multi-stakeholder initiatives
NTPA	National Tripartite Plan of Action on Fire Safety and Structural Integrity
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
OHS	Occupational health and safety
PVH Corp.	Phillips-Van Heusen Corporation
RMG	Ready-made garment sector
RMGP	Ready-Made Garment Sector Program
RFA	Responsible fashion and apparel
RSC	RMG Sustainability Council
SMO	Social movement organisations
SNS	Social networking sites
The Compact	Sustainability Compact
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
BoF	The Business of Fashion
TLR	Transnational labour rights
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations

US	United States
USAS	United Students Against Sweatshops
WRC	Worker Rights Consortium

Chapter 1 Introduction

If the girl who made your skirt's not paid
you cannot say it's beautiful
if the pay is less than a living wage
you cannot say it's beautiful
if the coloured dyes now lie in rivers
poisoned fish, polluted waters
if there's no sick pay, no toilet breaks
if the factories are in decay
no matter what your mirror says
or how stylish you might look today
you cannot claim it's beautiful

Holly McNish (2017: 23)

In 1991, based on her experience in graduate school at Yale University, fashion scholar Valerie Steele wrote that fashion was an 'F-word' in academia. Steele claimed that, in conversation, fashion held 'the power to reduce many academics to embarrassed or indignant silence' (Steele, 1991: 17). More than 25 years later, my experience researching fashion in academia has been quite different. When I first began this project, my go-to response to anyone that asked what I was researching was that I was 'interested in transnational activism and the labour rights of garment workers in Bangladesh.' Responses to this answer were of the polite 'oh, sounds interesting' variety. After completing my fieldwork, however, my reply to this question changed: 'I'm researching fashion-based activism.' This reply would elicit a more enthusiastic reaction. *Fashion*, it would seem, sounds more exciting than 'labour' or 'garment', and even 'worker.' I didn't need to say more; it didn't seem to matter that the activism was transnational, or even that it related Bangladesh. What was once seen as frivolous now captures attention. Does the focus on fashion, however, displace the role of labour rights in the imaginary?

Using the 'sweatshop' metaphor, transnational labour rights activists have long connected the labour conditions of garment workers to the shopping habits of Western consumers. When Rana Plaza collapsed in Savar, Bangladesh, on 24 April

2013, the global fashion and apparel industry saw its largest disaster to date; more than 1,130 garment workers were killed, and thousands more injured, amongst workers producing everyday clothing products for export to European and North American markets (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2015; Donaghey and Reinecke, 2017; Star Business Report, 2014). The international media storm that emerged to document the disaster captured the names of international brands sourcing from the building. Rana Plaza embodied the sweatshop metaphor.

1.1 Unravelling the responsible fashion and apparel (RFA) movement

In the wake of the collapse, Bangladesh witnessed unprecedented partnerships between local and foreign stakeholders. Among them were transnational labour rights (TLR) organisations, made up of activists and activist groups, as well as global unions, companies, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). While some were connected to one another prior to the building collapse, others came together after the disaster. These stakeholders make up part of a global movement for responsible fashion and apparel (RFA), a complex global movement of stakeholders working in connection with efforts that aim to challenge and disrupt conventional systems of fashion and apparel production and consumption with respect to social and environmental issues. My conceptualisation of the RFA movement is not perfect (Swedberg, 2018). Rather, it is a working framework, designed to capture the breadth of stakeholders and efforts engaged in supporting labour rights for garment workers in Bangladesh, and elsewhere (see Chapter 2, section 2.4). RFA movement stakeholders mobilise resources (domestic and international) to advance claims related to social and environmental justice across the global fashion and apparel industry. Toward understanding distinctions between efforts within the RFA movement, I have categorised stakeholders into groupings (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.1). Drawing on Weber's conceptualisation of ideal types (Swedberg, 2018), I have grouped the stakeholders I interviewed and encountered throughout my research into four analytic categories: (1) fashion-based stakeholders, (2) labour right

organisation-based stakeholders, (3) industry-based stakeholders, and (4) other-related stakeholders.¹

Included in the RFA movement, alongside industry and TLR organisations are individuals and groups engaged in fashion-based efforts, promoting sartorial dissent by challenging systems of fast-fashion production and consumption in unique ways, and on various fronts: lobbying and campaigning governments, brands and retailers to improve safety for workers employed in global fashion and apparel systems of production, throughout the entire supply-chain; supporting alternative fashion-product consumption, through mending clothing, sharing fashion and apparel items; widening knowledge and skills related to responsible fashion production and consumption through education and training schemes. Like their movement colleagues, fashion-based stakeholders engage with government, brands, retailers and fashion and apparel consumers. What makes their efforts unique, however, is the way they frame fashion as a site of intervention—a space from which to consider relationships between people and places, including relationships of power, structure, and agency, under the logic of global capitalism. Conventional efforts from TLR organisations and industry alike have historically divided workers and consumers into separate and distinct categories. Further, they have generally considered fashion through its material lens, tying it to fast-fashion systems of production and consumption through supply chain logistics.

In the wake of the collapse, the thesis holds a critical ambition to (1) better understand the efforts of transnational stakeholders connected to the RFA movement, and to (2) determine whether fashion-based efforts are distinct from other strategies at play within the RFA movement landscape. Individuals and organisations connected to the RFA movement, determine and alter their views as a result of social encounters. Understanding knowledge as constructed through social interactions (Bryman, 2008), the thesis aims to examine the nature of RFA movement stakeholder engagement in support of labour rights, post-Rana Plaza. The research problem and findings are situated within a theoretical framework which understands

¹ Names of interviewees and informants have been changed to protect confidentiality (Appendix E).

the transnational efforts of RFA movement stakeholders as operating within a global culture industry (Lash and Lury, 2007). Lash and Lury (2007) pay special attention to how objects move in social spaces, mapping non-linear tracks. Conventional efforts from TLR organisations frame and showcase systems of exploitation related to worker rights by drawing linear connections between systems of production and practices of consumption. Yet these efforts, not unlike the products and systems they interrogate, move in non-linear fashions. The global fashion and apparel industry is a multi-mediated landscape (Crewe, 2018; McRobbie, 2016), and one in which fashion operates as both material and symbolic terms (Rocamora and Smelik, 2016). Under the global culture industry, fashion is not just an instrument for securing domination (Adorno, 2001; Horkheimer and Adorno, 2002), nor is it singularly a means to engage in self-expression (Craik, 1994; Crane, 2000; Crane and Bovone, 2006), or a way to practice resistance (Murray, 2002; Thompson and Haytko, 1997). Fashion is also a tool for contemplation, used to prompt reflections not only on the social and environmental issues challenging the global fashion and apparel industry, but on the logic of capitalism itself, and the relationship between the global market and individual agency.

1.2 Transnational efforts for labour rights

It is not uncommon for transnational stakeholders to link the consumption habits of Western consumers to worker exploitation. Transnational efforts aimed at supporting labour rights frame consumers of fashion and apparel products in binary terms, as either cultural dopes, operating either through a state of false consciousness under the logic of capitalism, or as unrestricted agents, free to negotiate for themselves, and with great pleasure, how they should dress (McRobbie, 1997). Such binary conceptualisations frame fashion and apparel consumption strictly through a middle-class lens (McRobbie, 1997). Lines between conceptualisations of power and agency are blurry; when individuals adapt or alter goods to resist and rebel against social convention, there is potential for the market to adopt and reintegrate such alterations back into mainstream fashions (Carducci, 2006). Yet consumers also engage with fashion to project political values and to communicate dissent (Reger, 2012). Here, fashion is a tool from which to express opposition (de Casanova and Jafar, 2016).

When consumers and workers are seen as distinct from one another, class dimensions are ignored resulting in little space to imagine workers as consumers and consumers as workers (McRobbie, 1997). Moreover, research into everyday fashion practices reveals that consumers engage with their wardrobes in ways which challenge fast-fashion market forces (Fletcher, 2014a, 2016; Woodward, 2009, 2014).

Long before Rana Plaza collapsed, TLR efforts had developed a reputation from critics, in varying degrees, for portraying garment workers as poor and weak, desperate for foreign assistance from corporations and affluent Western consumers (Brooks, 2002, 2007; Chowdhury, 2009; Kabeer, 2000; Kabeer and Mahmud, 2004; Ruwanpura and Roncolato, 2006; Seidman, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2011; Siddiqi, 2000, 2009, 2011; White, 2002). Within the RFA movement, transnational stakeholders engaging in efforts to support labour rights have begun turning their attention away from state mechanisms and institutions and instead call on brands to improve labour conditions for garment workers in transnational supply chains. Designed to motivate consumers to engage in individual and/or collective contentious actions, campaigns, projects and initiatives highlight extreme cases of labour rights violations, ‘naming and shaming’ companies to engage in voluntary initiatives through corporate social responsibility (CSR). In this process, transnational labour rights activists and organisations have strategically framed labour rights as human rights (Seidman, 2007). Some stakeholders working within the RFA movement have pushed further, linking labour rights to environmental security and framing worker safety as a sustainability issue.

In global fashion and apparel production, it is not uncommon for labour rights violations to become entangled with environmental issues, occurring often alongside them. Imagine a t-shirt made with organic cotton, sewn by workers earning less than their country’s legal minimum wage. Alternatively, imagine a t-shirt made with conventional cotton, sewn by workers earning a living wage. In the first case, steps were taken to protect the environment but not the workers. In the second case, the opposite was true. The treatment of workers can be disconnected from the treatment of the environment; workers can be supported while the environment is compromised and vice versa. Moreover, efforts made to support one or the other (worker rights

and/or the environment) may not be consistent. Imagine, for example, organic cotton dyed with toxic chemicals. Imagine a third case, where both social and environmental considerations were managed together—a fair-trade, organic, t-shirt, woven from rain-fed cotton on solar-powered looms by workers democratically represented through their union. While social and environmental issues can occur alongside one another, they can also collide. In the case of labour rights, workers labour across various touchpoints throughout the global fashion and apparel system and may be treated differently from one location to another.

1.3 Responding to the collapse

There were five different garment factories manufacturing fashion and apparel products in the Rana Plaza building. There was also a bank. Workers reportedly knew the building was unsafe before they began their shift that day, as cracks in the walls had previously been discovered. Due to safety concerns regarding the structural integrity of the building, the bank decided not to open. The garment factories, however, had orders to fill. After the collapse, foreign and local businesses, governments, and activist organisations, among other stakeholders, cooperated to establish and/or implement guidelines, policies and procedures designed to prevent another Rana Plaza. While some initiatives focused specifically on securing fire and building safety, others sought to strengthen core labour rights, such as the right to collective bargaining, for example, or to promote sustainability across the sector. RMG sector-wide initiatives which emerged to support workers and safeguard the industry include the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (the Accord), the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety (the Alliance), the ILO's Ready-Made Garment Sector Program (RMGP), and the National Tripartite Plan of Action on Fire Safety and Structural Integrity (NTPA). At the same time, the European Union (EU), the ILO and the Government of Bangladesh implemented the Sustainability Compact (the Compact), an agreement designed to improve working conditions in Bangladesh by reforming the country's labour law and improving worker safety in factories (Delegation to the UN and other international organisations in Geneva, 2013; International Labour Organization, 2013c, 2013d):

RMG sector-wide initiatives, post-Rana Plaza
The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (The Accord)
The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety (The Alliance)
Ready-Made Garment Sector Program (RMGP)
National Tripartite Plan of Action on Fire Safety and Structural Integrity (NTPA)
The Sustainability Compact (the Compact)

Table 1.1: Post-Rana Plaza industry schemes

These initiatives were not the efforts to emerge from the RFA movement as a result of the collapse. Fashion Revolution (FashRev), a pro-fashion, UK-based SMO, was also born in the name of Rana Plaza, with a global organising a global campaign for responsible fashion. FashRev is a transnational SMO operating in over 90 Country Chapters, harnessing social media tools to connect RFA movement stakeholders through pro-fashion efforts.

FashRev was not the only transnational SMO to launch a web-based campaign in response to the collapse. Other RFA movement organisations, such as United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) and 18 Million Rising (18MR) designed websites, subverted corporate branding, created online petitions, and organised social media campaigns to target specific brands they connected to the disaster, in conventional naming and shaming efforts: USAS developed various websites and online petitions that labelled specific companies ‘death traps’,² while 18MR created a mock website and subsequent online petition to pressure Gap Inc. (the Gap) into signing the Accord (18MillionRising.org, 2014; Gap Inc., 2014).³ Industry stakeholders also launched web-based initiatives in the wake of the disaster; shortly after the collapse (May 2013), for example, the Gap launched a website titled ‘We Are Committed’ (WeAreCommitted.com), providing a space for its consumers and

² Such as North Face and Gap Inc. (Gap Death Traps, 2014; United Students Against Sweatshops, 2017)

³ These examples are no longer available online. However, I captured screenshots of the website of one example (North Face) using Evernote technology during data collection (see Appendix A). This is just one example of the types of web-based campaigns that launched in the wake of Rana Plaza.

the wider public to ask the company questions related to its supply chains.⁴ Despite initiatives from across the RFA landscape, FashRev stands apart from its movement colleagues. FashRev claims to represent the unique global pro-fashion subsection of the RFA movement. The FashRev website operates as a central hub for communication related to the FashRev organisation, its global network, and its campaign efforts. While other RFA movement activist stakeholders operate websites that promote ‘naming and shaming’ strategies and techniques—nominating brands for an ‘award of shame’ (The Public Eye Awards, 2014), or encouraging protesters to stage a ‘die-in’ (United with Victims of Benetton, 2014a), for example—the FashRev website takes a different approach: it seeks to *celebrate* fashion by engaging with brands, rather than by shaming them. FashRev organisers call themselves ‘pro-fashion protesters’ (Fashion Revolution, 2014h). At the surface, this approach appears to mark a significant shift within the RFA movement. The thesis aims to better understand RFA movement stakeholder efforts in the wake of the collapse, adding nuance to current understandings which currently do not explore the relationship between the conventional strategies from TLR groups and industry organisations and those employed by their fashion-based movement colleagues.

1.4 Thesis roadmap

I begin the thesis by overviewing important background information related to garment making in Bangladesh, as well as on the history of transnational efforts to support labour rights in the country, setting a contextual scene of conditions surrounding the Rana Plaza collapse (Chapter 2). I reveal that since the birth of Bangladesh and the subsequent early beginnings of its garment sector, transnational stakeholders have claimed a stake in the structure and function of fashion and apparel production in the country. After establishing the history and nature of foreign intervention into garment making in Bangladesh from transnational stakeholders connected to the global RFA movement, I review relevant literature and reveal gaps in knowledge which exist in terms of understanding why elite transnational

⁴ The URL now redirects to the company’s corporate sustainability page. During data collection, however, I captured screenshots from a company blog post announcing the project. I captured this data using Evernote technology (see Appendix B).

stakeholders working within this realm engage with the movement in the ways that they do (Chapter 3). I then move to outline the methodological framework of the thesis, situating my approach alongside scholars who understand the global fashion and apparel industry as a force which is both material and symbolic, working within a global multi-mediated landscape (Chapter 4). I identify with the RFA movement; I am a part of it. Since 2009 I have worked as a volunteer online activist-educator, developing and sharing resources through a website I developed alongside a fellow RFA movement colleague. My experience in the RFA movement has uniquely positioned me to undertake this research, as both insider and outsider, gaining access to people and places I may otherwise not have. To make sense of the efforts of elite RFA movement stakeholders, post-Rana Plaza, I conducted research both online and offline, in a two-phase process.

The research is presented across four empirical chapters (Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8), following the order in which the project was carried out: starting online with FashRev and the FashRev website, then through qualitative interviews. Using the FashRev website as an entry-point into the wider RFA movement, I carried out a website analysis which focused on the SMO's organisational structure, its wider network, and its campaign efforts. I then moved offline and conducted 42 interviews with elite stakeholders working across the RFA movement, formally and/or informally connected to efforts related to labour rights in Bangladesh, post-Rana Plaza. I also engaged in various RFA movement efforts in connection to the Rana Plaza disaster: I walked in protest marches in both London and in Dhaka and attended various events, such as documentary film screenings, presentations and panel discussions. I held in-person interviews in various settings, from a pub in Scotland to a corporate office in Dhaka, reflecting the global nature of the RFA movement. With interviewees and informants spread across continents, interviews also took place via mobile phone and Skype. Interviews with key stakeholders working within the realm of transnational efforts for 'responsible fashion' revealed a complex, multi-mediated, transnational landscape—a landscape where 'fashion' is used as a vehicle to support labour rights in unique ways.

FashRev emerged in the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse to transform the fashion and apparel industry; the FashRev project claims to represent a global movement of RFA stakeholders. The FashRev website provides a research window into a unique corner of the RFA movement. With the pro-fashion SMO as my starting point, I unpack the FashRev project using data collected from its website between 2014 and 2016 and describe the FashRev organisation, its global network, and the 2015 campaign (Chapter 5). I show how the ‘fashion revolution’ grew from an idea, crafted on a whim by one RFA movement stakeholder, into a global SMO supported by an international network of stakeholders from across the fashion and apparel industry. FashRev makes its strategic vision for the fashion and apparel industry explicitly clear and claims to represent the interests of stakeholders from across the RFA movement. Yet there are tensions and discrepancies between how the FashRev website supports the organisation’s aims and efforts to engage with its own community and with the wider RFA movement landscape (Chapter 6). Drawing on research from della Porta and Mosca (2009), I assess how the FashRev website, works to support communication from members of its own community. There are, however, limitations to online data collection. The FashRev website and related FashRev social media data cannot capture the nuance of negotiations taking place behind the scenes at the SMO, nor can it represent the scale and scope of the RFA movement landscape—where stakeholders connect, across borders and clash, change their minds, subvert convention, and join forces, all at the same time.

On the surface, the FashRev website reads as a lifestyle campaign—a space where consumers can learn how to manage individual style in a way that supports their love of fashion, people, the environment and economic empowerment. Through this framing, the FashRev website does not challenge RFA movement convention. Rather, it plays into familiar tropes of historical RFA movement efforts, where consumers were portrayed as holding power over the lives of garment workers. Under the RFA movement, however, there is much more than this to fashion-based efforts, some of which is revealed in the FashRev website analysis. Moving behind the online scenes, I unpack findings from qualitative interviews with elite RFA

movement stakeholders engaged in efforts aimed at supporting labour rights in Bangladesh, post-Rana Plaza.

1.5 Conclusion

The thesis begins with a poem which highlights a central tension within the RFA movement which relates to binary framing of workers and consumers. Definitions of aesthetic beauty related to fashionable clothing, produced and consumed within the global fashion and apparel industry, are reconsidered when knowledge related to the conditions under which it was made is revealed. At the same time, workers and consumers are engaged in a dance of dependency: when conditions of labour for garment workers are framed as existing at the hands of consumer demand, consumers hold power over workers; when consumers are told that their purchasing power determines the rights of workers, consumers hold power over workers. Such framing is conventionally employed by transnational RFA movement stakeholders and heavily critiqued by scholars for reproducing stereotypes related to worker agency. Garment making in Bangladesh has a long-standing history of intervention from foreign stakeholders. When Rana Plaza collapse, new opportunities for engagement arose.

This thesis is interested in efforts of transnational RFA movement stakeholders in the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse. The RFA movement is made up of a diverse range of individuals and organisations, operating under a variety of motivations, with a spectrum of concerns related to social and environmental challenges connected to global fashion and apparel production: from the labour rights of garment workers to climate change and environmental security; from structural inequality related to class and gender, to animal abuse. In the wake of the disaster, RFA movement stakeholders organised in new and profound ways. While some focused on building infrastructure, lobbying companies and governments to improve workplace standards, others viewed the collapse as an opportunity to challenge the entire fashion and apparel industry. Alongside government inadequacies and industry negligence, pressures from fast-fashion brands and their supporters were understood

as creating manufacturing conditions which compromise the safety of both people and planet.

RFA movement stakeholders understand knowledge exchange as a central pathway toward behaviour reform. Irrespective of stakeholder category, interviewees and informants prioritised information sharing through an *information provision reform* pathway, actively seeking knowledge to help them to navigate global systems of production and consumption under the logic of capitalism. This thesis reveals that the efforts of fashion-based stakeholders are not so distinct from those in circulation by their movement colleagues. While most efforts addressed in the thesis focused on exposing social and environmental issues in terms of their relationship to processes of production, some take a different approach. Harnessing fashion as a tool of engagement, certain stakeholders are at work within the RFA movement in ways which challenge and disrupt convention. Building upon research into transnational efforts for garment worker rights in Bangladesh, this thesis questions whether post-Rana Plaza strategies and tactics differed from conventional practices. By broadening the scope of analysis to include fashion-based efforts, the thesis contributes to knowledge related to social movements, political consumerism and the sociology of fashion.

Chapter 2 Context

With an estimated 162 million inhabitants (The World Bank, 2018; UN Data, 2018), Bangladesh is the 8th most populated country in the world (Guhathakurta and Schendel, 2013). It is also one of the largest manufacturers of fashion and apparel products globally, second only to China (Donaghey and Reinecke, 2017; Kabeer, 2019). The country has secured tremendous socio-economic growth since gaining independence in 1971, despite facing environmental destruction from the 1970 cyclone, the resulting social, cultural, political and economic costs of achieving independence through the Liberation War, and the devastation of the 1974-75 famine. Today, Bangladesh is marred by evidence of corruption, systemic violence and wide-scale government threats (Asian Human Rights Commission, 2018). This all sets a backdrop not only to its ready-made garment (RMG) sector but to the conditions which led to the Rana Plaza collapse and the efforts transnational stakeholders have operationalised since to support worker safety in the country.

This chapter introduces the context of the Rana Plaza collapse, beginning with the development of the RMG sector and the subsequent measures employed by the Bangladeshi government and the international community to safeguard the industry and its workers. Alongside inadequacies of government, industry, and international organisations, fast-fashion is cited as a root cause of Rana Plaza: the pace and speed of fast-fashion production are identified as directly linked to the collapse. Understanding the logic of fast-fashion is therefore necessary. Transnational efforts aimed at mitigating dangers facing garment workers have generally focused their attention on issues related to supply chain logistics. In the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse, some transnational efforts have disrupted convention.

2.1 Garment making in Bangladesh: History and overview

In the 20th century, today's Bangladesh, deeply rooted within the Bengal delta, suffered three major disasters: famine, partition and war. During this time, it came under rule from two separate foreign powers, having its name changed at least four times: Bengal, East Bengal, East Pakistan and Bangladesh. Before gaining independence in 1971, Bangladesh, then East Pakistan, had sought autonomy for two

decades (Lewis, 2011). Despite securing sovereignty, it has a history of heavy dependence on foreign assistance. Post-independence, the country saw an increase in foreign aid and became the poster child for poverty, famously referred to as an ‘international basket case’ (Lewis, 2011: 36); during the 1970s, Bangladesh became ‘the test case’ on poverty and development (Lewis, 2011: 37). Although international development stakeholders began working in Bangladesh long before 1971, international attention for foreign aid came during its struggle for independence thanks in part to celebrity activism; when news of the Liberation War and Bangladesh’s struggle for sovereignty travelled to America in 1971, singer George Harrison held a rock concert in Central Park to draw attention to, and raise money for, the people Bangladesh (The George Harrison Fund for UNICEF, 2018). It was the first concert fundraiser of its kind for a humanitarian effort and would begin a new trend in music philanthropy (The George Harrison Fund for UNICEF, 2018). Foreign aid came to significantly impact the country’s economic and political development (Lewis, 2011; van Schendel, 2009). War had left the country with massive material destruction and foreign aid assisted in domestic recovery efforts, with transnational efforts partly coordinated by the United Nations (UN) (van Schendel, 2009). Yet Bangladesh has a long history in international trade, dating back as early as 1500, with the arrival of Portuguese traders (van Schendel, 2009). When Bangladesh gained independence, it became ‘open’ once again, reclaiming its place in global trade.

The making of a ‘Made in Bangladesh’ brand in the global fashion and apparel industry began at independence when, alongside foreign assistance, the country experienced growth in its formal economy through agriculture, such as wheat and rice farming, for example, as well as livestock farming, and fisheries (Lewis, 2011). Improvements were made to transportation infrastructure and telecommunications networks, and new industries were formalized, such as the ready-made garment sector, and the (mostly informal) ship-breaking sector (Lewis, 2011). Despite a relatively slow start, garment manufacturing has grown exponentially since the early 1980s, thanks in part to industry incentives from the government and a seemingly

endless supply of low-skilled labourers, leaving the countryside in search of employment (Kabeer, 2019).

It is estimated that over 3,000 factories manufacture fashion and apparel items in the country's RMG sector, a majority of which is exported to the European Union and the United States (Faruque, 2009; Haider, 2007). The RMG sector employs approximately 2.5 million workers directly, 80 per cent of whom are women (Kabeer and Mahmud, 2004: 138), and 10 million workers indirectly, 'through backward linkage industries' (Faruque, 2009: 8), and acts as a leading source of internal remittance, employing 'mostly women who have migrated from rural areas' (Overseas Development Institute, 2010: 14); in 2012, it was estimated that 90 per cent of garment workers within the RMG sector were rural migrants (Miller, 2012: 15). This is because between 1985 and 2010, while employment in agricultural sectors dropped, Bangladesh saw employment within manufacturing sectors double at the hands of the rising RMG industry (International Labour Organization and International Institute for Labour Studies, 2013). Although Bangladeshi women working within the RMG sector are considered 'an integral part' of the country's economic gains and 'instrumental' to reducing poverty in rural areas within the country, working conditions remain compromised (International Labour Organization and International Institute for Labour Studies, 2013: v). The full scope of garment making in Bangladesh is unknown: since the Rana Plaza collapse, a report released by the NYU Stern Center for Business and Human Rights estimated the sector spans more than 7,000 factories employing over 5 million workers, 56% of whom are women (Labowitz and Baumann-Pauly, 2015). While exact figures remain contested (Anner and Bair, 2016), there is no question that Bangladesh's economy has grown heavily dependent on the global fashion and apparel industry (Kabeer, 2019).

Internationally, the sector has developed a reputation for harsh working conditions, with garment worker wages coming in below the poverty line. In 2010, amidst garment worker protest (The Guardian, 2010), the minimum wage was increased to approximately 39.00 USD per month, up from approximately 21.00 USD per month in 2006 (Burke and Hammadi, 2010; Fair Wear Foundation, 2012). In November

2013, the government of Bangladesh announced it would again increase the minimum wage of garment workers, this time to approximately 68.00 USD (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2013). The latest wage increase came after wide-scale protests from workers and sector unrest, as well as increased pressure from both domestic and foreign transnational labour rights organisations as a result of various industrial disasters, including the Rana Plaza building collapse (Burke, 2013). Despite harsh working conditions and low wages, the International Labour Organization and International Institute for Labour Studies (2013) cite the sector as having been a driving force for the country, on the road to economic sustainability, connecting economic growth through decent work to poverty reduction. The historical legacy of international and domestic policies designed to facilitate the growth of the RMG sector in Bangladesh since 1971 have impacted the structure of the industry as it stands today. Custodial and extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, a failed judicial system, and media censorship through the use of intimidation are ongoing issues within the country (Asian Human Rights Commission, 2018).

Garment manufacturing in Bangladesh has been a fixture of transnational stakeholder efforts since the 1980s: first as a threat to domestic production through a competitive advantage which was perceived as unfair; then for its use of child labour. During the 1980s, seeking to limit the number of garments the country could sell to the United States and Europe, Western unions called for trade restrictions to be imposed through quotas systems (Kabeer, 2000). According to Brooks (2007) and Miller (2012), the Multifibre Arrangement (MFA)—an agreement on trade quotas adopted in 1974 through an amendment to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) (Kabeer, 2000; Miller, 2012)—was designed to promote the international trade of garments in the long-term, while protecting domestic textile and apparel manufacturing interests in the United States and Europe in the short-term. When France, the UK and the USA imposed quotas on imports to Bangladesh through the MFA's 'anti-surge' clause in 1985, the industry shrunk by two-thirds (Kabeer, 2000). The countries believed that imports from Bangladesh were compromising industry within their own countries.⁵ Then, during the 1990s, there was an organised call from

⁵ France and the UK removed the quotas in 1986 (Kabeer, 2000).

foreign stakeholders to see Bangladesh eliminate child labour. When Iowa Senator Tom Harkin introduced the Child Labour Deterrence Bill – also referred to as the Harkin Bill – to the United States Senate, however, child workers in Bangladesh became more vulnerable (Brooks, 2007; Ruwanpura and Roncolato, 2006; Seidman, 2007; White, 2002). Before 1993, when the Harkin Bill was introduced, there were an estimated 200,000 child labourers working in garments in Bangladesh (Kabeer, 2000). This number dropped to 10,000 by 1995 (Kabeer, 2000). The effects of this policy placed these children, as well as the individuals these children supported through additional income from garment work, in economically vulnerable positions (Ruwanpura and Roncolato, 2006). As a result, this method of handling child labour in Bangladesh was criticised as a top-down approach, seen as implementing Western corporate social responsibility (CSR) standards without careful attention to context (Brooks, 2007; Kabeer, 2000; Seidman, 2007). Eventually, Western labour unions came to understand that industry demands for low-cost labour—the so-called ‘race to the bottom’ in search of the lowest costs for production, including wages—meant companies would move from one country to the next in search for low garment worker wages (Kabeer, 2000); foreign union attitudes soon shifted away from protectionist understandings on labour rights toward a more global perspective for international garment worker solidarity when it was no longer in the best interest to compete with foreign workers (Kabeer, 2000).

Although transnational stakeholders were engaged in initiatives, programmes, and campaigns relating to labour rights in Bangladesh long before Rana Plaza, a string of industrial disasters in the decade leading up to the collapse reignited foreign and domestic interests (Table 2.1).

<i>Factory Fires in Bangladesh between 2005-2013, as reported internationally</i>		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Factory</i>	<i>Impact on Workers</i>
11 April 2005	Spectrum Sweater factory building collapse	64 dead, 80 injured
3 December 2010	Factory explosion and then worker stampede	2 dead, 62 injured

14 December 2010	That's It Sportswear factory fire	29 dead
24 November 2012	Tazreen factory fire	112 dead, 200 injured
26 January 2013	Smart Export factory fire	7 dead
24 April 2013	Rana Plaza building collapse	>1,100 dead, thousands injured
9 May 2013	Tung Hai Sweater factory fire	9 dead
8 October 2013	Aswad garment factory fire	10 dead (estimated)

Table 2.1: Timeline of garment factory fires and building collapses in Bangladesh since 2005. Source: CBC News (2013)

Reports claim that over 5000 garment workers have been either killed or injured in garment factory disasters in the country (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2014a; Miller, 2012; Solidarity Center, 2018) (see Timeline, in Appendix C). In the context of Rana Plaza, perhaps the most striking of these is the ominous Spectrum Sweater factory collapse, which killed over 60 workers, producing fashion and apparel products for Zara (Inditex). In 2005, after the Spectrum factory collapsed, the government turned their attention to occupational health and safety (OHS) in the country's RGM-sector, through the establishment of the National Forum on Social Compliance, two OHS task forces and a monitoring 'cell' in the Export Promotion Bureau (Miller, 2012). Yet compensation schemes have been slow, confusing, and meagre at supporting workers and their families (Prentice, 2018a, 2018b). Considering the scale and scope of such incidents, stakeholders in the country have been working to establish a national system for employment injury insurance (Prentice, 2018a).

2.2 Industry-based initiatives, post-Rana Plaza

When Rana Plaza collapse, four key RMG sector-wide initiatives emerged: the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (the Accord), the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety (the Alliance), the Ready-Made Garment Sector Program (RMGP), which is led by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the National Tripartite Plan of Action on Fire Safety and Structural Integrity (NTPA).

Each initiative held similar aims and objectives relating to improving working conditions in factories. While worker compensation schemes for the sector can be traced back to as early as 2005 in response to the Spectrum collapse (Prentice, 2018b), the NTPA was born in 2012. To understand the current context in which these initiatives operate, it is necessary to overview historical factors driving these agreements, starting first with the Accord and the Alliance, and then the NTPA.

The origins of both the Accord and the Alliance go as far back as 2010, when a fire broke out in the “That’s It Sportswear” factory, killing 29 workers. At the time of the fire, the factory was producing clothing for the Phillips-Van Heusen Corporation (PVH Corp.) and Gap Inc. (the Gap), among other Western brands and retailers.⁶ In 2012, PVH Corp. became the first company to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in partnership with transnational labour rights (TLR) organisations [the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC), Worker Rights Consortium (WRC), the International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF), and Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN)] and eight trade unions (both international and Bangladeshi)] (ABC News, 2012; Clean Clothes Campaign, 2012; Ross et al., 2012). It was not the fire itself that drove the company to sign the MoU, however. In 2012 an exposé run by American television network ABC, nearly one year after the disaster, featured damaging statements from Tommy Hilfiger (International Labor Rights Forum, 2012; Ross et al., 2012). When ABC network reporters went behind the scenes at a Tommy Hilfiger fashion show, they heard from Hilfiger that the company only worked with suppliers with a ‘gold standard’ and that it was no longer doing business in Bangladesh. This was not true, as the company was still sourcing in Bangladesh. Tommy Hilfiger and a representative from PVH Corps. then requested an interview with ABC to provide clarification. According to industry stakeholders I spoke with, the embarrassment from the ABC exposé required damage control. When the program aired, ABC announced that the company had notified them they would be signing the MoU. After Rana Plaza, the MoU become the Accord. The Gap, on the

⁶ Tommy Hilfiger, the fashion and apparel brand named after its Principle Designer, Tommy Hilfiger, became a subsidiary of PVH Corp. in 2010 (Tommy Hilfiger, 2016), joining Calvin Klein and other global brands and retailers (The Phillips-Van Heusen Corporation, 2016).

other hand, did not sign the MoU. Instead, the company announced it would continue its efforts to support fire and building safety in Bangladesh through other means, later partnering with companies to establish the Alliance (Clean Clothes Campaign and Network, 2013).

As presented on their respective websites, the aims and objectives of the Accord and the Alliance appear quite similar:

The aim of the Accord is the implementation of a program for reasonable health and safety measures to ensure a safe and sustainable Bangladeshi [Ready-Made] Garment industry for a period of five years.

Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (2016b)

The Alliance is focused on systemic and sustainable improvements in fire, structural and electrical safety within Bangladesh's garment factories. We are seeking to ensure that garment workers work in safer environments.

Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety (2016a)

While the Accord includes the importance of health and sustainability in their understanding of safety, the Alliance appears to focus more on the structural environment of factories and buildings.

The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh
A five year legally binding agreement between brands and trade unions to ensure a safe working environment in the Bangladeshi RMG industry
An independent inspection program supported by brands in which workers and trade unions are involved
Public disclosure of all factories, inspection reports and corrective action plans (CAP)
A commitment by signatory brands to ensure sufficient funds are available for remediation and to maintain sourcing relationships
Democratically elected health and safety committees in all factories to identify and act on health and safety risks

Worker empowerment through an extensive training program, complaints mechanism and right to refuse unsafe work.

Table 2.2: The focus of the Accord agreement
Source: Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (2016a)

The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety
Standards and Inspections: Aligned Fire Safety and Structural Integrity Standard; Factory Inspections; Member Sourcing Policies;
Remediation: Guiding Remediation with Corrective Action Plans; Access to Finance; Worker Compensation
Worker Empowerment: Alliance Worker Helpline; Safety Committees
Training: Focus on Safety; Training Implementation; Tracking and Enabling Progress (Spot-checks and Support Program); Impact Evaluation

Table 2.3: The focus of the Alliance agreement
Source: Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety (2016a)

Media coverage of the two separate schemes saw an industry divided, informally referring to the initiatives as the European Accord and the North American Alliance (Greenhouse and Harris, 2014). A major difference between the two schemes was that the Accord was legally binding for an initial 5-year period. While the Alliance was also legally binding, also running an initial 5-year scheme, Alliance member companies were free to leave the agreement (Clean Clothes Campaign and Network, 2013). When the schemes officially launched, however, industry questioned whether such efforts would be any different from previous attempts improve worker safety without sufficient support from stakeholders in the country, including the government of Bangladesh (The Economist, 2013).

In response to Rana Plaza, the government of Bangladesh implemented a National Tripartite Plan of Action on Fire Safety and Structural Integrity (NTPA) for the sector (Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2013; International Labour Organization, 2013g). The NTPA was initially established after the Tazreen Fashions Limited factory fire, which saw 112 workers killed. The plan was first introduced as a Joint Statement of Commitment at a meeting partly organised by the

ILO and the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), committing to establishing the NTPA with the goal of ‘taking comprehensive action aimed at preventing any further loss of life, limb and property due to workplace fires and fire-related accidents and incidents.’ (Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2013). Both the Accord and the Alliance work in partnership with the Bangladesh government’s NTPA through the Ready-Made Garment Sector Program (RMGP). The ILO further supports efforts from the government of Bangladesh through various programmes funded by the governments of Canada, the Netherlands, and the UK, as well as the US, such as the Sustainability Compact (the Compact) (Delegation to the UN and other international organisations in Geneva, 2013; International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2019; International Labour Organization, 2013c, 2013d, 2016).

National Tripartite Plan of Action on Fire Safety and Structural Integrity
Assess structural integrity and fire safety
Strengthen labour inspection
Train and raise awareness of workers and management on occupational health and safety (OHS) and worker rights
Rehabilitation of injured workers

Table 2.4: The objectives of the NTPA

Source: Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (2013); Marian (2013)

Ready-Made Garment Sector Program
Building and Fire Safety Assessment
Strengthen Labour Inspection & Support Fire and Building Inspection
Build Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) awareness, capacity and systems
Rehabilitation and skills training for victims
Implement Better Work program in Bangladesh

Table 2.5: The focus of the RMGP

Source: International Labour Organization (2013e)

In 2013 the ILO helped to establish the Rana Plaza Arrangement, a compensation fund for those most impacted by the collapse (The Rana Plaza Arrangement, 2019). The Arrangement raised more than 30 million dollars (US), with all funds dispersed to the victims and their families by 2015 (Prentice, 2018a; The Rana Plaza Arrangement, 2019). Meanwhile, with factory remediation underway, both the Accord and the Alliance published lists of factories which fell under their mandate on their respective organisational websites (Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, 2016c; Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, 2016b), with the Bangladesh government also publishing a list of registered RGM factories (Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments and Employment, 2016). At the end of 2018, the Alliance shuttered its doors after completing its 5-year term (Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, 2018), while the Accord successfully extended operations in the country after petitioning the government. The Accord will now transition into a national program for the sector, the RMG Sustainability Council (RSC) (Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh). The Accord, the Alliance, the NTPA, the RMGP and the Compact were not the only standards in play post-Rana Plaza; they are at work alongside industry certification schemes such as ISO and ISEAL, along with the need to comply with the ILO conventions and with the United Nations (UN) Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

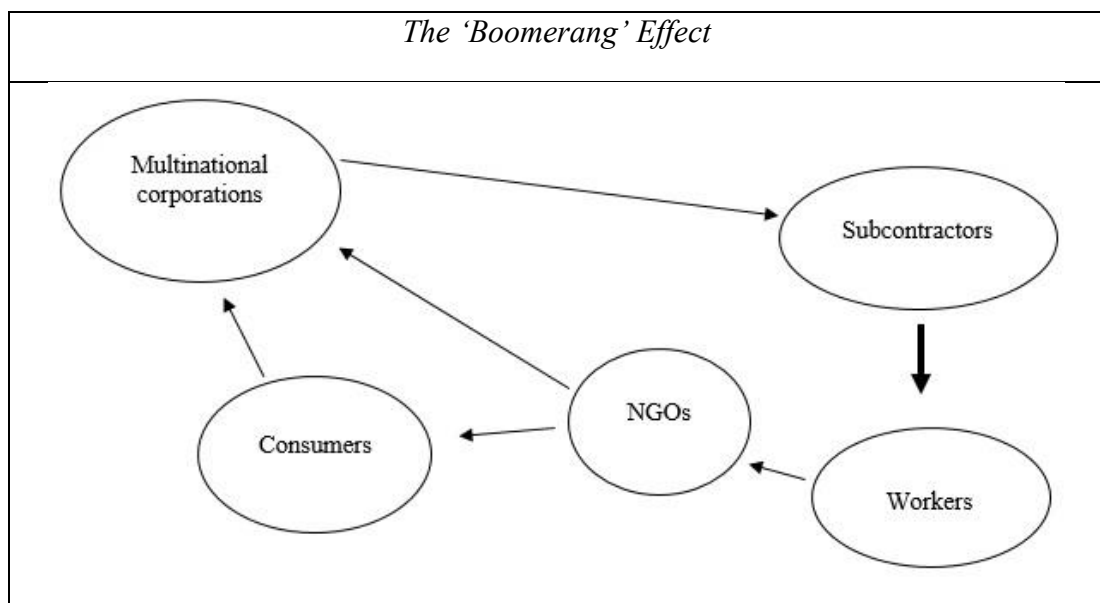
Interventions through global partnerships formed by international organisations, brands, unions, and governments, such as the Accord and the Alliance, have had marginal success in improving conditions of labour of garment workers in Bangladesh. Since the collapse, a significant number of factories have been inspected for structural integrity, worker wages have risen, and there has been an increase in union representation (Kabeer, 2019). Yet, these changes must be contextualised. Regarding structural improvements, factory owners are under more pressure than ever before: they have reportedly borne the brunt of factory remediation costs while being expected to meet the increasing demands of fast-fashion production logic—producing more product through shorter lead times for less money (Kabeer, 2019). With respect to the rise in wages for workers and an increase in union participation, these wins are not as significant as they first appear: wages have risen but remain

inadequate (Kabeer, 2019); union participation has increased, yet workers face anti-union intimidation and remain challenged by a 30% membership threshold for union registration (Kabeer, 2019; Rahman and Jabin, 2017). The conditions which led to the Rana Plaza collapse are not confined to government inadequacies, with respect to establishing insufficient infrastructure and upholding the rule of law. Fast-fashion systems of production have been associated with challenging conditions of labour; companies and brands associated with fast-fashion are blamed for their role in causing social and environmental challenges plaguing the global fashion and apparel industry.

2.3 Conventional efforts in the face of fast-fashion

Fast-fashion was born in the 1990s when European brand Zara (Inditex) transformed conventional high street retail manufacturing and distribution by increasing both the speed by which items were made of available and the assortment of styles on offer (Tokatli, 2008). As a system of production, it was designed to reduce lead times in clothing production to keep up with the latest and greatest trends in fashion. Fast-fashion companies have evolved to set new standards in speed (Siegle, 2011). In 2014, retailers associated with fast-fashion were introducing, on average, 120 new fashion products to their stores per week (Caro and de Albéniz, 2014). Fast-fashion is not focused on building entire collections, rather, it involves designing individual pieces with high fashion value (Caro and de Albéniz, 2014). Siegle (2014) nearly single-handedly attributes the Rana Plaza disaster to the fast-fashion consumption habits of Western consumers. Pointing to the unrealistic production lead-times required to keep up with consumer demand echoes, in part, claims made by Miller (2012) in reference to the Spectrum Sweater factory building collapse, and Kabeer (2019) regarding increasing pressures facing factory owners in Bangladesh. While fast-fashion systems of production and consumption are cited as contributing to garment worker labour rights violations in countries such as Bangladesh (Kabeer, 2019; Miller, 2012), transnational stakeholders engaged in mitigating such issues have generally avoided the subject of fashion, using the term only as a synonym to apparel, or clothing.

TLR organisations advocating on behalf of garment workers, such as the CCC or the ILRF attempt to bring about solutions to workplace grievances by shedding light on labour rights violations across the supply chains of everyday fashion and apparel products. These stakeholders are known to engage in so-called ‘boomerang’ tactics, a concept rooted in the international human rights movement (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). In the boomerang, efforts move in a predictable pattern, as garment workers call on foreign stakeholders for assistance in resolving labour rights grievances (Seidman, 2007): transnational stakeholders receive worker complaints, determine which complaints warrant action, and devise a plan of action, such as a consumer-facing campaign (Seidman, 2007). The boomerang effect works as follows: (1) Western consumers encounter consumer-facing campaigns, (2) follow campaign instructions to apply pressure on companies to resolve worker grievances, and (3) companies bow to consumer pressure and respond by implementing efforts to support workers, intervening with subcontractors, for example, to settle grievances with workers (Seidman, 2007) (Graphic 2.1). Brooks (2007) understands the ‘boomerang pattern’ as a tactic employed by garment workers when they have exhausted avenues for support within their own countries, from, for example, local institutions or from their employer. When this happens, local stakeholders ask foreign stakeholders to intervene on local issues: hence, the boomerang metaphor.



*Graphic 2.1: A ‘Stateless Consumer-Based Regulatory Vision’
Source: Seidman (2007: 19)*

As ‘boomerangs’ can have limited reach without the eventual support of local stakeholders, it is crucial to understand where a boomerang call for action has originated, and the particular contexts which surround the issues (Brooks, 2007; Miller, 2012). Historically, consumer-facing campaigns advocating for garment worker rights stemmed from organised labour (Miller, 2012), with support from TLR organisations (Brooks, 2007). As a result, they attempt to focus on local issues; ‘in general, when local labour activists call on their national state to protect ‘rights’ at work, they speak in terms of regulating relationships within an existing community’ (Seidman, 2007: 18). Where labour grievances are framed through national boundaries, efforts seek local and national laws – operated by the state – to secure and protect worker interests. As worker unions increasingly challenge conditions of labour under capitalism (Crossley, 2003), labour struggles cannot be contained within state boundaries. TLR organisations work alongside industry stakeholders in a complex arena, and efforts employed by organisations and companies evolve over time through stakeholder engagement (Brooks, 2007). The boomerang metaphor is therefore not as useful as it first appears, with respect to understanding how efforts move across borders and into boardrooms, in response to the logic of global capitalism.

Since the 1970s, both global and domestic economic policies in favour of trade liberalization and market-driven competition have hindered the labour movement’s ability to secure state protection for workers (Seidman, 2007). As newly independent Bangladesh began up its first factories, companies developed flexible managerial strategies to respond to the demands of global trade liberalization, fostering a floorless ‘race to the bottom’ approach to production through transnational production and subcontracting (Seidman, 2007). The practice of subcontracting involves outsourcing key departments, connecting companies to their factories and factory workers through contracted labour. Transnational production supports fragmented productions lines that move across national boundaries, where ‘components of the final product might be made in one region, brought together for final assembly in another, and sold to consumers in still a third’ (Seidman, 2007: 23). As conventional understandings between citizen and consumer began to blur (Crane,

2010), transnational stakeholders engaged in efforts advocating for labour rights, shifted their attention away from government and toward the brand.

Prior to the 1990s, TLR stakeholders directed their attention toward state mechanisms to resolve labour grievances, understanding the state as the most appropriate means of achieving resolution (Seidman, 2007). During the 1990s, international understandings on labour rights began to merge with those of human rights, with the ILO shifting its attention to central standards for labour, internationalizing labour rights as universal rights (Seidman, 2007). Since then, TLR stakeholders began altering conventional strategies to rely on a specific formula of engagement, targeting brands associated with supply chains found operating in violation of international workplace standards. When placed under pressure to protect valuable reputations, companies respond with various CSR strategies (Seidman, 2008b; Smith et al., 2011):

global brands have learned that, when activists reveal child labour, worker abuse or unsafe conditions in their supplier plants, they can ward off threats of global embarrassment and transnational consumer boycotts by adopting codes of conduct and promising to monitor compliance, saving their image by showing they are policing the behaviour or sub-contractors down the global supply chain.

Seidman (2008b: 991)

TLR organisations target popular brands ahead of lesser-known companies. Not only because larger brands make up a significant portion of the market, but because they have experienced more success by focusing on bigger companies (Merk, 2009). Large companies are seen as capable of responding quickly to allegations (Brooks, 2007; Seidman, 2008b; Smith et al., 2011).

In the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse, TLRs efforts followed their trusted formula, lobbying fashion and apparel brands connected to the disaster to pay compensation to victims and their families through the ILO Arrangement. Further, the disaster presented an opportunity to pressure large brands, whether associated with the collapse or not, to support the Accord. The Accord was framed by certain TLR stakeholders as a superior agreement to the Alliance for its connections with global trade unions and worker associations in Bangladesh (Accord on Fire and Building

Safety in Bangladesh, 2019a). Moreover, the European CCC, the Canadian-based MSN, and the American-based TLR organisations ILRF and WRC, all acted as Witness Signatories to the Accord (Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, 2019b). Elite stakeholders working across governments, companies and TLR organisations, however, do not represent the only interests at play in the global RFA movement. Prior to the disaster, transnational fashion-based stakeholders were also engaged in a wide-ranging spectrum of efforts aimed at tackling social and environmental issues associated with the global fashion and apparel industry.

2.4 The responsible fashion and apparel (RFA) movement: Toward a Fashion Revolution?

A growing body of literature written by academics, industry practitioners, journalists, educators and consultants has emerged to challenge the global fashion and apparel industry.⁷ These writers reference what I term the ‘RFA movement’ in different ways, drawing on an assortment of concepts in an ever-growing lexicon of terminology (Fletcher and Tham, 2014a; Thomas, 2008). As the phrases ‘sustainable fashion’ and ‘fashion and sustainability’ are commonly used throughout this space (Fletcher and Tham, 2014b), my conceptualisation of an RFA movement needs explaining. I use the phrase ‘responsible fashion and apparel’ strategically; my intention is neither to dilute the significance of other terms or phrases, nor is it to suggest that these terms should not continue to be used by individuals and groups connected to social and environmental concerns as they relate to the global fashion and apparel industry, or any other sector. Although notions of sustainability directly connect and are embedded within the landscape I address in this thesis, they do not go far enough to capture the breadth of issues in question.

The RFA movement uses an array of vague terminology to reference various aspects of safety in fashion and apparel manufacturing, as it relates to social and environmental challenges. Umbrella terms, such as ‘sustainable fashion’ and ‘slow

⁷ See, for example: Black (2008, 2012); Blanchard (2007); Brown (2010); Cline (2012); Entwistle (2014); Fletcher (2008, 2014b, 2016); Fletcher and Grose (2011); Fletcher and Tham (2014b); Gwilt and Rissanen (2011); Hoskins (2014); Lavergne (2015); Lee (2007); Littrell and Dickson (1999); Minney (2011, 2017); Parker and Dickson (2009); Press (2016); Siegle (2011, 2014).

fashion’ make up what Thomas (2008) calls an ‘ecofashion lexicon’ where vague terms ‘coexist and cross-fertilize’ (2008: 530). ‘Ecofashion’ is itself a vague term, and one that favours an environmental lens: environmental safety is at the core of this lexicon. While ‘sustainable’ fashion falls under the ecofashion umbrella, certain stakeholders working within the RFA movement use the term in reference to labour rights violations as well as environmental exploitation. The term ‘responsible’ allows me to imply ‘safety’ in a general sense—without any strict definition. A catch-all concept, it can be associated with any number of diverse qualities (social and/or environmental) relating to fashion and/or apparel design, production and consumption. For example, the term ‘responsible’ can be used to reference safe physical spaces (structures) as well as worker safety and environmental protection, from the structural integrity of a factory, to the hourly wage of the workers involved in production or the types of chemicals used (or not used) in fabric and dyes (Crane, 2010; Tseëlon, 2011). I use ‘fashion and apparel’ together so as not to lose any nuance associated with either (Rocamora and Smelik, 2016).

RFA movement stakeholders often frame labour rights and worker safety as an issue of sustainability, where both environmental destruction and labour rights violations viewed as by-products of the same system: the production, consumption, use, and disposal of conventional global fashion and apparel. The term ‘sustainability’ is built into the very architecture of global initiatives working to curb social and environmental exploitation. The concept of sustainability, alongside that of ‘sustainable development’, grew in the 1980s with the publication of *Our Common Future*, also known to as the Brundtland Report, at the United Nations (UN) World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 (Blühdorn, 2016). The report was a call for action in search of solutions to global social and environmental challenges. Using the concept of sustainability, the report also aimed to highlight interconnections between global challenges, arguing that issues could not be compartmentalised into separate categories (nation, sector, social, environmental, etc.) (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). The UN has maintained its support of the term: in 2015, it replaced its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aiming to tackle

poverty reduction and secure environmental protection (United Nations General Assembly, 2015); in 2019, it launched an Alliance for Sustainable Fashion—alongside a social media hashtag #UNfashion—bringing together various UN organisations to examine how the fashion and apparel industry can work to support the SDGs (UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, 2019). Considering the origin of the concept through its use in global agencies, sustainability appears an all-encompassing term. In practice, however, it has lost its lustre (Blühdorn, 2016).

Although fashion scholars have embraced the concept of sustainability (Fletcher and Tham, 2014b), some have made critical calls to widen and deepen themes related to sustainability, expanding upon that which the term has come to represent in both academic and industry circles alike (Fletcher and Tham, 2014b; Union of Concerned Researchers in Fashion, 2019). Introducing yet another concept to an already crowded, and growing, lexicon (Fletcher and Tham, 2014a; Thomas, 2008), my analysis requires a net cast wide enough to capture the array of meanings imbued within the different terminology in use, and also one which allows for a converging of related movement subfields. I therefore introduce ‘RFA movement’ as a large umbrella concept which, I argue, allows for a greater inclusion of diverse and divergent interests of individuals and organisations working to challenge social and environmental conditions across the global fashion and apparel industry—not only in Bangladesh but elsewhere as well.

While consumers have always been included in the antisweatshop story (Micheletti and Stolle, 2007), the concept of ‘fashion’ is generally operationalised as a synonym for ‘clothing’ (Balsiger, 2014b; Kabeer, 2019; Ross, 2007). Even when considered for aesthetic and symbolic value, it is typically through a lens of fast-fashion consumption and production. This is not surprising, as the concept of fast-fashion is associated with creating conditions of labour where violations can flourish, as buyers require factories produce a greater number of items or a variety of styles at a lower price, all with shorter lead-times to complete orders (Kabeer, 2019; Taplin, 2014). Yet fashion can be used to project political values and to communicate dissent (Reger, 2012), and also as a tool to express opposition using the body as a site of resistance (de Casanova and Jafar, 2016). Fashion is not only a site of domination but

also a space for resistance and self-expression (Barnard, 2017; Crewe, 2008, 2018; Fletcher and Tham, 2014b; Tarrant and Jolles, 2012). Research from Fletcher (2014a, 2016) and Woodward (2009, 2014) reveals that how an individual engages with fast-fashion products within their own wardrobes, does not necessarily connect with the speed and pace of fast-fashion systems of production and distribution.

My conceptualisation of the RFA movement as a global project builds upon what Micheletti and Stolle (2007) refer to as ‘the political consumerist antisweatshop movement’ (2007: 157). As a metaphor, the word ‘sweatshop’ conjures up images of poor, vulnerable, mostly women workers toiling away for hours on end in unsafe factories without proper pay in countries, such as Bangladesh, imagery which has been problematised for telling too simple a story (Brooks, 2007; Kabeer, 2000; Seidman, 2007). The antisweatshop movement gained momentum during the 1990s, however, as a result of increasing awareness of labour rights violations in factories subcontracting for Nike (Kabeer, 2019; McIntyre, 2011). In the US, domestic efforts to eradicate labour rights violations existed much earlier than this, even before the Triangle Factory fire in New York, which killed 149 workers in 1911 (Kheel Center, 2019; Ross, 2007). In the context of Europe, the origins of the transnational labour rights (TLR) organisation the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC), and its engagement with political consumption, date back to the 1960s and stem from involvements with international development projects (Balsiger, 2014b). The ‘sweatshop’ metaphor itself originated in the 1800s when transformations in technology enabled new systems of fashion and apparel production: ‘sweaters’ referred to the workers who became known for toiling across factories in Europe (Micheletti and Stolle, 2007; Miller, 2012). Efforts from TLR organisations draw attention to social and environmental issues related to the global fashion and apparel industry by highlighting grievances embedded within manufacturing processes. Yet the power of fashion is at work beyond processes of production. The RFA movement represents a vast spectrum of stakeholders—individuals and organisations alike—engaged in efforts to mitigate the social and environmental footprints of the global fashion and apparel industry, including fashion-based efforts.

While the term ‘stakeholder’ can be broadly defined, it is often associated with business and organisations in the context of determining appropriate scale and scope for corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies (Crane et al., 2009). As defined by Freeman (2002), company stakeholders are ‘groups and individuals who benefit from or are harmed by, and whose rights are violated or respected by, corporate actions’ (2002: 41). Included in this definition are ‘suppliers, customers, employees, stockholders, and the local community’ (Freeman, 2002: 39). In terms of corporate governance, multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) are organised schemes that work to bridge the interests, typically divergent, of more than one stakeholder, toward achieving mutual benefits (Utting, 2002). While some MSIs operate in partnership with corporations, others organise in contestation against conventional practices; MSIs are as varied as the stakeholder interests they work to represent.

RFA movement stakeholders could be understood as ‘transnational activists’ engaged efforts which frame social and environmental challenges in particular ways in order to advance certain claims, drawing on transnational networks and engaging in politically contentious actions (Tarrow, 2005). For Tarrow (2005), these are *‘people and groups who are rooted in specific national contexts, but who engage in contentious political activities that involve them in transnational networks of contacts and conflicts’* (2005: 29, Italics in original text). According to Tarrow (2005), transnational activists are a subgroup of what he calls ‘rooted cosmopolitans’, an umbrella term used to capture *‘individuals and groups who [mobilise] domestic and international resources and opportunities to advance claims on behalf of external actors, against external opponents, or in favour of goals they hold in common with transnational allies.’* (2005: 29, Italics in original text).

Although this conceptualisation may appear suitable to describe individuals and organisations connected to the RFA movement, not all interviewees and informants I spoke with, despite engaging in ‘contentious political activities’ to advance claims related to social and environmental justice, identified with the term *activist*. I, therefore, use the phrase ‘stakeholder’ to reference the transnational, rooted cosmopolitans (individuals and organisations, and including companies), engaged in efforts—both contentious and noncontentious collective political actions—aimed at

addressing the social and environmental issues associated with the global fashion and apparel industry. While some RFA stakeholders engaged with the movement in an unpaid capacity, for example, others worked on projects as paid employees. Across the RFA movement, collective action was not necessarily contentious and could involve uncontroversial behaviour from stakeholders working within organisations and institutions. I therefore use the term ‘efforts’ to capture and reference the various types of ‘work’ and ‘actions’ in motion from stakeholders across the RFA movement. These individuals and organisations hold a stake not in any one company, necessarily, but a broad share in the overall global project that is the RFA movement.

When Rana Plaza collapsed, an opportunity for alternative strategies emerged. As TLR stakeholders assumed their role in lobbying brands and supporting multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) between governments, companies and local stakeholders, transnational fashion-based stakeholders organised under the RFA movement with a different agenda. In the wake of the collapse, Fashion Revolution (FashRev) emerged to, among other aims, call on fashion and apparel consumers to ask questions. Specifically, to ask that brands and retailers be more transparent about the social and environmental conditions in their supply chains. A transnational fashion-based SMO, FashRev creates and supports pro-fashion efforts aimed at curbing social and environmental challenges across the global fashion and apparel industry. Although based in the UK, the global initiative operates in over 90 countries through satellite Country Chapters. From Bangladesh to Scotland, FashRev understands fashion as a powerful tool to draw connections between people and places. What sets FashRev apart from its RFA movement SMO colleagues, is how it celebrates fashion. Rather than support labour rights by engaging in transnational efforts designed to name and shame brands, FashRev calls for more meaningful engagement with clothing by sharing resources, such as educational material and industry reports, aimed at supporting transparency.

2.5 Conclusion

Bangladesh faces no shortage of challenges, including environmental uncertainty, political corruption, and inadequate infrastructure (Lewis, 2011). Garment making

has been an economic engine for the country, growing exponentially from when the initial factories were built during the 1970s. Rana Plaza was not the first disaster to hit the industry, and it wasn't the last. The sheer scale of the disaster prompted widescale engagement from foreign stakeholders. Responding to the collapse, global fashion and apparel industry stakeholders, including businesses, governments, and activist organisations, established and implemented guidelines, policies and procedures designed to prevent another Rana Plaza from ever taking place. While some remain in operation, soon to be replaced (The Accord), others have come and gone (The Alliance). How Bangladesh will continue to navigate garment making within its borders in a post-Rana Plaza era is yet to be determined. The country is no stranger to foreign intervention. Efforts from transnational stakeholders to control conditions related to garment making, whether by proposing industry quotas or challenging the use of child labour, are embedded in the origin of garment making in Bangladesh; its RMG sector has been under pressure to adhere to the interests of international stakeholders since the industry first began taking off.

Conventional efforts of TLR organisations aiming to support workers in the country have faced scrutiny for prioritising their own interests ahead of the those of workers themselves. Employing boomerang tactics for support, transnational efforts began focused their attention away from governments and towards companies, naming and shaming brands connected to labour rights grievances. The use of boycotts has gone out of fashion, with TLR organisers more attuned to the impact a closed factory can have on workers. MSIs and CSR programmes and policies have stepped in to attempt resolutions, requesting factory owners adhere to strict codes of conduct. Meanwhile, due to pressure to produce more garments, at an accelerated pace—the fast-fashion regime—factory owners cut corners in order to meet the demands of foreign buyers. As a result, fast-fashion systems of production and consumption have been associated with creating conditions and opportunities for worker exploitation to flourish. When Rana Plaza collapsed, brands producing in the building were called out their role in placing orders with factories in structurally unsound buildings. TLR organisations, industry stakeholders, foreign governments and the international community moved in on the country to establish MSIs aimed at addressing worker

safety. The focus of these projects related to compensation for workers (the ILO Arrangement) and factory remediation (The Accord, The Alliance, and NTPA and the Compact, for example), but also included support for union building and organising as well as wages.

In the wake of the collapse, such programmes and initiatives were not the only ones to develop from under the RFA movement. FashRev also grew from Rana Plaza. Rather than focus their efforts on specific issues related to the collapse, this pro-fashion SMO worked to motivate and organise a diverse collective of RFA movement stakeholders, drawing connections between a wide range of issues relating to the social and environmental impacts of the global fashion and apparel industry. FashRev embraces fashion but challenges how the global industry has come to take shape as a result of fast-fashion. In the boomerang, efforts are said to move in a linear pattern, as garment workers call on foreign stakeholders for assistance in resolving labour rights grievances (Seidman, 2007). Yet under the global culture industry (Lash and Lury, 2007), neither calls for support nor strategies of intervention move in a linear fashion. The global fashion and apparel industry is a multidimensional landscape (McRobbie, 2016), where transnational efforts—like the objects they address—move and shift in multilaterally. A review of literature related to transnational efforts aimed at supporting garment worker rights in Bangladesh reveals gaps in knowledge into the nature of fashion-based interventions, and their capacity to confront structural inequalities within the global fashion and apparel industry.

Chapter 3 Review of relevant literature

Under the logic of global capitalism, social and environmental issues plaguing the fashion and apparel industry transcend geographic boundaries. Remediation efforts from across the Responsible fashion and apparel (RFA) by groups such as Fashion Revolution (FashRev) and the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC), for example, must, therefore, develop and implement strategies which simultaneously tackle and redress multiple global issues, impacting multiple stakeholders, across multiple locations. In conventional market-driven efforts to thwart the excesses of fashion consumerism transnational labour rights (TLR) stakeholders not only invite shoppers to consider their role in social and environmental challenges relating to the global fashion and apparel industry, they create opportunities for consumers to distance themselves from products, and places, associated with grievances related to such issues.

Previous investigations into such efforts have labelled them problematic, with researchers drawing specific attention to how dynamics related to power and agency emerge and are reinforced when elite industry stakeholders determine which issues to prioritize as well as control how issues are framed (Brooks, 2007; Kabeer, 2000; Seidman, 2007). This literature is helpful for locating the RFA movement within a wider global network of movements working to challenge neoliberal globalization, and for identifying strategic actions already active within that wider movement network. The unique case of transnational strategic efforts related to garment making in Bangladesh is particularly helpful for documenting past actions within a specific historical context (Brooks, 2007; Kabeer, 2000, 2019; Ruwanpura and Roncolato, 2006; Seidman, 2007; White, 2002). This backdrop helps determine whether transnational efforts have changed since Rana Plaza. While research has exposed dynamics of power and resistance in terms of practices of production and consumption, gaps in knowledge remain in terms of making sense of how elite, transnational RFA movement stakeholders engage with such issues as worker safety and climate justice. Connected to this are knowledge gaps relating to how these stakeholders understand the concept of ‘fashion’ and whether fashion-related efforts aimed at confronting social and environmental issues are distinct from conventional

transnational approaches. What role, if any, can 'fashion' play within this transnational movement? Do notions of fashion support or confound solidarities?

3.1 Mass culture, agency and resistance under the logic of capitalism

Fashion is often conceptualised into binary categories: as either a product of high culture, with cutting edge designs accessible only to the wealthy elite; or as a product of a fast-fashion system, mass-producing cheap, disposable goods. When understood through this dichotomy, fast-fashion represents the epitome of 'mass culture', or what Horkheimer and Adorno (2002) refer to as 'the culture industry' in their seminal work, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. In the culture industry, fast-fashion consumers follow trends. Although consumers drive the industry through practices of consumption, the industry sets the agenda, dictating style and controlling speed. Culture, under the culture industry, has tendencies of existing only for consumption through capitalism (Buchanan, 2018); culture is mass-produced for financial gain in a capitalist economy, with cultural objects reduced to homogenised commodities, designed and manufactured in identical formation (Lash and Lury, 2007). In the culture industry, cultural forms become commodities available for purchase at prices determined by the market. Although this system depends on consumers to exist, they are viewed as cultural dopes: '[t]he customer is not king, as the culture industry would have us believe, not its subject but its object' (Adorno, 2001: 99).

Critics of the culture industry approach take issue with the notion that consumers lack agency within the system (Lash and Lury, 2007). In the context of fashionable clothing, counter positions to the culture industry theorists become clear through arguments which understand fast-fashion through a lens of democratization. Through the standardization of high-fashion (high art) objects, consumers can purchase fashionable clothing at affordable price-points, clothing previous only available to fashion elites. This disrupts norms and expectations related to cultural capital and distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). Whether understood as a space for domination or agitation, the culture industry and its critics view global commodity chains as existing under the logic of global capitalism. The *global culture industry* developed by Lash and Lury (2007), offers a revisioning of the culture industry as first

described by Horkheimer and Adorno (2002). Lash and Lury (2007) challenge both the culture industry and its critics. Rather than understand commodities of culture in terms of a linear space for domination and resistance across product supply chains, Lash and Lury (2007) argue that cultural objects permeate and dominate everyday life in a non-linear fashion (Lash and Lury, 2007: 4). Lash and Lury (2007) pay little attention to social inequalities, such as conditions of labour embedded within global capitalism (Gunster, 2008), despite understanding the global culture industry as an ‘emergent regime of power’ which ‘results in inequalities, disparities and deception’ (Lash and Lury, 2007: 7).

In the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse, calls for attention to structural violence at work in garment making for women in Bangladesh have highlighted global disparities embedded in the logic of capitalism (Chowdhury, 2014; Kabeer, 2019; Siddiqi, 2017). As the social justice movement hangs on ‘the understanding that neoliberalism is not just a fact of life but a choice, formed by the political project of coordinated elites – and hence subject to challenge’ (Cox and Gunvald, 2007: 430), it should presumably take stock of structural inequalities. Questions of agency and understandings related to whether and how individuals can control their everyday lives, through their use of fashion and apparel, for example, become crucial. For Siddiqi (2011), it is necessary to understand agency through ‘a framework in which all selves are relational and agency is produced in relation to specific cultural, political and economic logics’ (2011: 76). Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991) claim individuals are free to determine for themselves their own role in society (Milestone and Meyer, 2012). This position from Giddens (1991) stems from understanding modernity through the lens of a ‘risk society’, as developed by Beck (1992).

Through this lens, individuals are left negotiating for themselves how to interact with the world around them, thanks to a softening of expectations with respect to pressures to conform to habituated social roles (Lyng, 2008). For Giddens (1990), an individual is ‘neither a passive follower of rules nor an entirely free person, but a reflexive, knowledgeable actor, bound by particular circumstances’ (Tucker, 1998: 29). Through this lens, individuals hold the ability ‘to master their own biographies’ (Milestone and Meyer, 2012: 66). Yet as Skeggs (2004) points out, both Giddens

(1991) and Beck (1992) ignore dynamics of structural inequality in their respective analyses relating to reflexivity. As Milestone and Meyer (2012) highlight, interpreting this critique from Skeggs (2004), '[b]eing able to construct a lifestyle requires high levels of cultural and economic capital and a great distance from caring roles' (2012: 67). In the context of transnational efforts to support a more responsible fashion and apparel industry, homogenized understandings are unhelpful, as individuals lead varied lives, under unique social pressures. The role of emotions further complicates these dynamics.

Emotions are at work in the form of moral shock, when individuals react to news, or, as in the case of Rana Plaza, an event, that challenges understandings of the world, causing them to question their moral principles (Jasper, 2011). According to Holmes (2010), emotions play an important role in strategic efforts aimed at creating social change; understanding 'emotionalization is vital to examining how contemporary subjects reflexively produce a sense of feeling, thinking and being in the world which relies on others' (Holmes, 2010: 140). Holmes argues that debates related to reflexivity have historically failed to sufficiently consider the role of emotions, engaging instead with reason and emotion as separate and distinct (Holmes, 2010). And yet, emotions are key in decision making related to social movements (Jasper, 2011). Drawing distinctions between 'reflex emotions' (quick emotions, occurring in response to news or an event) with 'affective commitments' (long-standing emotions), Jasper (2011) argues that groups become strengthened by sharing in the former.

3.2 Social movements and the global fashion and apparel industry

The global social justice movement is heterogeneous, with stakeholders working within and across the movement addressing a diverse range of topics related to social, political, cultural and economic challenges, through various strategic efforts (projects, initiatives, etc.) with wide-ranging aims (della Porta and Diani, 2006). Although social movements are challenging to conceptualise (Crossley, 2002), they can be understood in general terms as groupings of individuals coming together and organising under shared interests with the aim of opposing or supporting social

change (della Porta, 2013; della Porta and Tarrow, 2005; Jenkins, 1983; Tarrow, 2005, 2011; Tarrow and Tilly, 2009; Tilly, 2004). Often referred to as a ‘movement of movements’ (Cox and Gunvald, 2007), the global social justice movement is a social movement of individuals and organisations working to challenge neoliberal globalisation (della Porta and Diani, 2006), or ‘the neoliberal project as a hegemonic force in global economic, political and cultural life’ (Cox and Gunvald, 2007: 430). Cross-movement stakeholder interaction is not uncommon in social movements; individuals engaged in social movements are often connected to more than one movement organisation at a time, which can create both opportunities and constraints, with overlapping interests, projects and actions (Mische, 2003). Although cross-pollination provides the potential to develop new strategic actions with positive cross-movement outcomes, there is also a risk of achieving negative results (Jasper, 2012).

Social movements occur when individuals confront and challenge others through contentious actions in order to advance their claims (Tarrow, 2011). Internal and external changes to the organisation of government since the 1960s have transformed the power of nation-states, impacting how social movements work and operate (della Porta and Tarrow, 2005), and debates exist related to what constitutes new social movements, generally understood as growing in the 1960s (Crossley, 2002). The RFA movement, however, is not represented solely by individuals and organisations engaged in middle-class struggles, with participants seeking ‘recognition for new identities and lifestyles’ (Polletta and Jasper, 2001: 286). Although such individual struggles may be found within the boundaries of the movement, so too may efforts by unions and worker-led associations. It is therefore helpful to move beyond conceptualizing the RFA movement in terms of ‘new’ or ‘old’ and instead consider how globalization through neo-liberal economics has worked to create a new era of social movements, with new actors and strategies (Crossley, 2003). The RFA movement intersects with other movements, such as environmental justice movements, and is itself a ‘movement of movements’ with transnational stakeholders taking on a variety of issues, ranging from child labour in garment factories, to animal welfare in wool and leather production, to deforestation at the hands of cotton

farming, cultural appropriation, and copyright infringement in product design, as just some examples. It is the heterogeneous nature of the movement which problematizes such neat categorisations as ‘new’ or ‘old’ social movement.

The concept of framing is important to understanding social movements. Collective action frames support strategic efforts as ‘action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate’ (Benford and Snow, 2000: 614). Constructed by activists and movement organisers, social movements framing is both dynamic and contentious; as activists and organisations challenge pre-existing understandings of phenomena, they adjust their frames accordingly (Benford and Snow, 2000).

Collective action frames stem from frame articulation and frame amplification – two key discursive processes (Benford and Snow, 2000). While the former is concerned with building a story and connecting dots, the latter is focused on factors that magnify the problem, such as an event. Yet, consensus on framing by activists and organisations cannot be assumed as activists conceptualize grievances differently (Benford and Snow, 2000; Crossley, 2002). The effectiveness of collective action frames in social movements depends in part on the movement’s ability to amplify frames that resonate with myths held within the target audience’s dominant culture (Benford and Snow, 2000). Important in this process for the RFA is internationalism, and internationalisation (Tarrow, 2005). Internationalisation, Tarrow (2005) argues, is central to transnational activism and is distinct from globalisation; while globalisation is connected to global capitalism and involves the flow of goods and people across borders, internationalism is viewed as ‘the institutional and informal framework within which transnational activism – some of it aimed at globalisation but much of it independent of that process – takes shape’ (2005: 19). Collective, thematic, action framing supports internationalisation in different ways.

Within the antisweatshop movement, episodic frames have been found to target specific issues and events while thematic frames are seen as drawing together connections in broad and abstract terms (Micheletti and Stolle, 2007). These frames can exist at the same time, on the same issue: a petition calling for the release of Gaspar Matalaev, a journalist arrested under the Turkmen Government for reporting on child labour in cotton farming (episodic frame) (International Labor Rights

Forum, 2019), for example, or a general campaign on child labour in cotton farming, calling for the Governments of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to ‘end cotton crimes’ (thematic) (Anti-Slavery International, 2019). Social movements can witness an expansion in stakeholder engagements during what is known as ‘cycles of contention’ (Crossley, 2002: 143), when a movement captures the attention of individuals not previously involved. This can spark movement ‘spin-offs’ as messages spread across national boundaries and grievances become reframed into a ‘master frame’ that appeals to wider audiences (Crossley, 2002: 145). Vague terminology further supports this process, as these act as ‘coalition magnets’ and work to facilitate alliances between diverse and divergent stakeholders (Béland and Cox, 2016). Across the RFA movement, such umbrella terms as ‘sustainability’ or ‘solidarity’—and in the case of this project, the term ‘responsible’—work to highlight potential coalitions. Tilly (2004) questions whether internationalisation compromises ‘amateur local, regional, regional, or even national efforts’ (2004: 148). Seidman (2007, 2008a, 2008b) echoes this concern, arguing that through a lack of attention to local contexts, the voices of local actors may not be heard.

Framing processes in collective actions are not static: they may support internationalisation but will be altered by it. For example, Seidman (2007) understands TLR campaigns as stemming from the human rights movement, with the former mimicking campaign strategies of the latter in order to appeal to diverse international audiences. She argues, however, that there are important distinctions between labour rights and human rights (Seidman, 2008b). Where labour rights are connected to citizenship, framed and contained within specific geographic locations, human rights reflect much broader, universal claims that move beyond state borders (Seidman, 2008b). When labour rights are understood from a human rights perspective, there is a risk that key elements central to securing labour rights for workers, such as those related to local contexts, may be side-lined (McIntyre, 2011); Seidman (2007) explores the role transnational campaigns can play in rewriting frames—the ‘labour rights’ story and the ‘human rights’ story—to capture international attention. Considering gender dynamics, Siddiqi (2011) critiques such transnational efforts as dangerously limiting, when ‘transnational ideas of women

rights as human rights are transplanted on to “local” landscapes of meaning’ (2011: 93). Transnational activism reproduces simple, single-story frames, related to workers and their lives, argues Siddiqi (2000, 2009, 2011).

Expansions in globalisation and digital technologies have created new opportunities for stakeholder engagement, cross-pollination amongst social movement actors, and the potential to internationalize campaigns and amplify claims (Tilly, 2004). Within the context of grassroots frameworks for social and political action, the internet is understood as a powerful tool that expands social networks by amplifying knowledge sharing capacities, enabling new forms of transnational solidarity and connecting individuals and groups through informal and formal ties (Carty, 2001). Digital media play a significant role in social movements by expediting network communications and actions (Earl and Schussman, 2002; Soon and Cho, 2013). The internet can be an ideal space to engage in transnational protest, with the potential to challenge the conventional top-down flow of communication in media channels through horizontal networks within interactive ‘media ecologies’ (Cottle, 2008: 859). In virtual social movement arenas (Jasper, 2008), network players have explored unconventional actions through digital communication technologies such as micro-blogging websites Facebook and Twitter, marrying conventional strategies to online collective action (Earl and Schussman, 2002; Soon and Cho, 2013). Yet Law (2003: 239) has questioned whether or not all stakeholders can secure appropriate representation in virtual space: ‘[w]hile many political activists consider the internet to be a fast, efficient and inexpensive way to build coalitions and campaigns, there is some doubt as to whether cyberspace can truly represent a global civil society’ (Law, 2003: 239). For Schradie (2011: 243), inequality in digital space results from class-based inequalities, playing out in online space. Demographics, such as age and gender, are seen as playing a role in user engagement and participation, along with access to broadband, and the number of devices an individual had access to will impact use (Baym, 2010; Schradie, 2011). Gajjala (2006) asks how issues, such as gender and class, might be represented in online space, cautioning researchers to avoid leaning on binary frames, where life online and life offline are seen to exist independently from one another. Technology is paradoxically productive for social movements: on

the one hand, it can support movement expansion through coalition building, aiding movements working toward internationalisation; on the other hand, it reinforces social inequalities related to gender and class, and inevitably excludes certain key stakeholders.

The Rana Plaza disaster created an opportunity for RFA movement growth, weaving together a broad, internationalised, story which connects labour rights and environmental security to practices of fashion and apparel production and consumption. While strategic framing can support movement expansion, it can also work to create division. Injustice framing, for example, amplifies notions of ‘victimisation’ (Benford and Snow, 2000: 615). While such tactics are not always used within the RFA movement, transnational efforts have embedded victimization into diagnostic framing, with garment workers positioned as weak and vulnerable, and Western consumers as strong and powerful (Brooks, 2007; Seidman, 2007). According to Jasper (2012), such framing is purely strategic as social movement actors are not the cultural dopes they are too often understood to be. To make sense of such strategies, the concept of ‘moral batteries’ is helpful; a moral battery is a tactic which connects two opposing frames to play with emotion (Jasper, 2011, 2012). Crewe (2018) notes how the global fashion and apparel industry actively works to hide certain facets of itself which may contradict others, such as conditions of labour against the social relationship an individual develops with their clothing, and transnational efforts have used moral batteries to highlight contradictions, bringing tensions into view. Jasper (2012) understands strategic actions as motivated by emotions, and draws distinctions between ‘reflex emotions’ and other, more cognitive, emotional responses: ‘[w]e often conclude that protesters have made a mistake or acted irrationally when we have simply not understood what they were trying to do, or how they were juggling several goals, or switching between goals’ (Jasper, 2012: 27). Transnational stakeholders must engage in strategic tactics, which work toward achieving multiple, shifting aims.

In social movements, strategic actions make up the tactics stakeholders use to persuade others to behave in a certain way (Jasper, 2012). Through calls for boycotts and buycotts, political consumerism is framed as a pathway for change by

stakeholders captured under the RFA movement umbrella. While boycotts call for consumers to deliberately avoid purchasing products associated with a specific brand or company, a buycott asks consumers to redirect their purchasing in support of a particular product (Pezzullo, 2011; Webb, 2007). Specifically, buycotts encourage consumers to engage in the marketplace by supporting certain products over others (Neilson, 2010). Such strategies are designed to leverage market forces by applying financial incentives to change a company's behaviour. In the context of garment worker rights in Bangladesh, market-driven efforts to support labour rights have fallen short.

3.3 Market-driven efforts to support worker rights: Government policies and corporate partnerships

Social movements have transformed since the 1990s, moving away from 'popular political radicalism' towards a 'commercialization of activism' (Yang, 2016), and this shift has seen social movement actors and organisations increasingly engage in partnerships of cooperation with governments, institutions and corporations. A cultural, or normative, approach to stakeholder theory seeks to persuade business toward voluntary action, while an institutional approach to stakeholder theory works to reform corporate practice through legislative action (Palpacuer, 2009; Sunley, 1999). Sunley (1999) argues that stakeholder theory is vague enough to be used as an 'umbrella' model that can incorporate a variety of strategies. Stakeholder theory presents both opportunity and risk as related debates remain political and ideological through multiple geographies and the divergent interests of diverse stakeholders (Sunley, 1999). Stakeholder theory falls short in attention paid to stakeholders indirectly connected to a business (Stieb, 2009), and a lack of conceptual clarity on what exactly stakeholder capitalism means has led to conflicting understandings and interpretations of the theory in practice (Sunley, 1999). While stakeholder theory is helpful for explaining how some industry-based stakeholders engage in strategic efforts to support their claims, Miller (2013) suggests that in practice, certain claims are prioritised ahead of others.

When large-scale, mass policies, designed to protect certain stakeholder interests, swept over Bangladesh in the 1980s and 1990s, garment workers faced dire

consequences, such as job loss and increased worker vulnerability (Brooks, 2007; Kabeer, 2000; Ruwanpura and Roncolato, 2006; Seidman, 2007; White, 2002). Since Rana Plaza, new frameworks for industrial compliance have been developed; the country's ready-made garment sector was flagged as high risk and placed on the agendas of both the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as a top priority sector (OECD Watch and Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD, 2014), and TLR groups, companies, and responsible fashion activist-entrepreneurs have used Rana Plaza as leverage, pushing diverse and divergent stakeholder agendas. In the context of developing workplace standards, however, Kabeer and Mahmud (2004) note that while 'top down imposition of standards may be better than having no standards at all [...] it does not substitute for building workers' awareness and their capacity to represent their own interests with employers and the government' (Kabeer and Mahmud, 2004: 155). Instead, they call for 'bottom-up capacity building' (Kabeer and Mahmud, 2004: 155).

Since the Rana Plaza collapse, Donaghey and Reinecke (2017), Lebaron and Lister (2015), Prentice et al. (2018), and Siddiqi (2017) have investigated the strengths and limitations of transnational efforts to support worker safety in Bangladesh. Reinecke and Donaghey (2015) show how coalitions of companies and brands came together to form the Alliance, albeit amongst extreme public and private pressure from global unions and transnational activists, and question how corporate social responsibility (CSR) alone can protect workers (Donaghey and Reinecke, 2017). Siddiqi (2017) highlights how the collapse shook, even if temporarily, the dominant narrative of women's empowerment with capitalism and that nurture 'neoliberal fantasies of growth without human (or, for that matter, planetary) cost' (2017: 276). Lebaron and Lister (2015) argue that supply chains have become trapped in an 'ethical audit regime', which is dangerous for being market-driven, and not politically neutral. Prentice et al. (2018) call for a new research agenda to expand definitions of worker safety. This requires 'bottom-up' solutions: solutions that enable workers to speak (1) for themselves and (2) to the nuance of their own unique circumstances (Seidman, 2007, 2008b, 2011). Bottom-up strategies are those that come from the

very individuals who hope to benefit from their implementation, and for Chowdhury (2009), to support workers requires ‘nuanced engagement with diverse women's realities on the ground’ (Chowdhury, 2009: 421).

Seidman (2008b) questions whether consumers can really use their purchasing power as leverage to better labour conditions on behalf of garment workers. Where transnational efforts frame corporations as the ultimate tool for labour rights protection, they side-step the role of the state in protecting labour rights through state regulations. Such campaigns present international and national governments as ‘lacking the power to change people's conditions of work and living’ (Brooks, 2007: 166). As Seidman (2007) notes, ‘[v]irtually all mechanisms designed to protect workers from abuse – from the specific details of national labour law and the character of labour organisations to practical enforcement tools – are located at the level of the national or provincial state’ (Seidman, 2007: 22). There is an assumption that states are not capable of appropriate engagement where labour rights are concerns (Seidman, 2007, 2008a). The Clean Clothes Campaign, for example, believes that certain governments may not be strong enough to support labour rights on their own, and that engagement with corporations, under pressure applied through transnational consumer campaigns, is not only necessary but crucial (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2014b). Seidman (2007) has questioned the long-term role stateless interventions can play in securing labour rights for workers, and challenges activists to reconsider the assumptions they have made in shifting their attention away from state institutions and toward corporate bodies, and how a ‘thinning’ of the state can protect workers, where economic competition is a force of driving interest through globalized production. She argues that ‘transnational activists have been too cavalier in their assumption that states in developing countries are incapable of reform’ (Seidman, 2008b: 368). For strategic efforts to succeed, they must understand the role key institutions—those directly connected to the state, and even the state itself—play in securing labour rights for workers (Seidman, 2008a). Brooks (2007) agrees and asserts that when transnational protest is fixed primarily on corporations, only marginal success is possible, as hierarchies of power from both protest and production ‘remain firmly in place’ (2007: 165). By concentrating on the

corporation, Brooks (2007) argues crucial local contexts are ignored, such as history, culture and politics.

There is a growing paradox in RFA movement efforts, where calls for ‘bottom-up’ initiatives are answered with market-driven CSR strategies. Lund-Thomsen (2008) has critiqued CSR for becoming its own industry. CSR has been interpreted as a powerful new form of Western imperialism (De Neve, 2009; Khan and Lund-Thomsen, 2011), engineered by an ‘elite group of stakeholders who draft, design and manipulate the social responsibility narrative’ (Hanlon, 2011: 83). Here too, there are calls for ‘bottom-up’ solutions (Lund-Thomsen, 2008). Knudsen (2015) shows that foreign governments are increasing their involvement in CSR through a process of internalisation—by regulating the activities of their countries’ businesses in another country through operations abroad. Tseëlon (2011) has critiqued business efforts for a contradictory ‘pic and mix’ approach to responsibility, ‘privileging issues which do not challenge businesses’ core perceptions or practices’ (2011: 4). Environmental challenges associated with apparel manufacturing have presented new sources of growth and profit. Corporate take-back programmes encouraging consumers to donate their used clothing in-store to receive a discount towards the purchase of new items are just one facet of an emerging circular economy. Brooks et al. (2017) question how such market-driven initiatives can ultimately support environmental security:

Radical visions of the future are required to help launch change, and progressive utopian ideas need to embrace different social futures and a revolutionary transformation of the relationships among fashion, consumption, technology, and the environment.

(2017: 499)

These scholars find market-driven efforts problematic, not only failing to address overconsumption but working to encourage it. Instead, they call for fundamental shifts in social behaviour. Moreover, a focus on fashion and apparel supply chains at points of production and consumption generally ignore the second-hand trade market, and, as a result, the labour rights of workers at the backend of a fashion and

apparel product's life-cycle, along with environmental challenges related to waste management, for example (Brooks and Simon, 2012).

3.4 Fashioning resistance through political consumerism

Across social movements, various tactics, or repertoires of contention, are used to advance claims (della Porta, 2013). Political consumerism is another strategy at work within the RFA movement, with consumers flagged as holding power to alter market forces and purchasing power framed as an important tool to enact social change (Crane, 2010: 361). The scale and scope of social and environmental challenges associated with the industry are vast, yet they are often understood in relation to fast-fashion production and consumption. In fast-fashion, a 'trickle-down' effect keeps high-fashion companies on their toes: high fashion companies design and produce high-cost garments; fast-fashion companies copy those designs and produce similar products at a much lower price point; high-fashion companies design and produce new high-cost garments, and the cycle continues (Pham, 2017). Pham (2017) argues that fast-fashion is culturally insignificant because it exists only to mimic high-fashion styles and design. Fletcher (2016) paints a similar picture. Of course, fashion is more than the consequences of its materiality under capitalism. Fashion consumption, including engagement with everyday clothing items, is a tool not only to express 'self' but also a visual social marker (Barnard, 2017). The ways in which individuals engage with fashion will depend on their social location and complicate notions of choice. In social theory, fashion is generally understood through structure and agency (Rocamora and Smelik, 2016).

Fashion has been interpreted as both material and symbolic, something which moves beyond the linear logic of supply chains under capitalism. Yet fashion has generally been understudied in the field of sociology, as well as other disciplines, including history, anthropology and even business. Interest in fashion studies gained momentum in the 1990s (McRobbie, 1997), and was mostly not taken seriously through the 19th and 20th centuries (Lemire, 2010: 2); a lack of attention is thought to be the result of historical perceptions which viewed fashion as frivolous and insignificant to social research (Crane and Bovone, 2006; Lemire, 2010; Rocamora

and Smelik, 2016; Steele, 1991). Where scholars have considered fashion, it has typically been understood as a Western phenomenon (Lemire, 2010; Lillethun et al., 2012; Rocamora and Smelik, 2016; Root, 2013). Simmel (1904) was one of the first social theorists to look at fashion. For him, fashion was a product unique to capitalism, designed to signal oppression through an authoritative, top-down system. He understood fashion as a tool for class distinction, used to carve out social stratification, and he was not alone. Fashion has been viewed as a tool of class ‘distinction’, operationalized to signal taste (Bourdieu, 1984; Rocamora and Smelik, 2016). Notions of cultural capital and habitus, however, and indeed any conceptualisations which view structure as determining individual behaviour, are not particularly helpful toward understanding whether and how individuals may use fashion to signal and negotiate agency in relation to capitalism. Political fashion consumption has emerged in fashion as movement to promote the consumption of alternative fashion and apparel products (Crane, 2010). However, pressures related to structural inequality are at work within practices of consumption (Pham, 2017). Fashion is a tool of resistance, where individuals counter social norms and disrupt dynamics of power, but it is also a tool of oppression, dictating societal roles as determined by the dominant ideology. Investigating how fashion and apparel consumption connects to social movements requires attention to culture:

[...] culture constitutes the interests on behalf of which people [mobilise]. It is to assert that activists’ choice of tactics and targets is shaped—indeed, limited—by prevailing cultural beliefs. And it is to assert that movements achieve significant effects as much by altering the cultural rules of the game, both within politics and outside it, as by winning formal policy reform.

Polletta (2008: 78)

Culture is a space for both domination and resistance (Buchanan, 2018; Lash and Lury, 2007), and political consumerism is seen as a pathway to resist dominant values and exercise self-expression. Here, fashion and apparel product consumption can act as a means to articulate values, or showcase allegiance to a particular social movement (Murray, 2002; Thompson and Haytko, 1997). Material culture, such as fashion and apparel, can be used to express collective identity (Polletta and Jasper, 2001), and fashion can signal ‘self’ in identity construction (Craik, 1994; Crane,

2000; Crane and Bovone, 2006). Understanding clothing as material culture, Crane and Bovone (2006) move further to connect fashion to values. The ways in which individuals engage with material culture may be symbolic (Milestone and Meyer, 2012).

Despite fashion's faults, Fletcher (2016) claims it can act as a catalyst for change. She argues, however, that fashion-based solutions must come from outside of the industry, moving away from current models of growth and efficiency. She suggests a pathway forward moves fashion and apparel consumers into a post-fashion era, away from a focus on consumption and toward understandings related to use: '[t]o choose what we are and what we do with clothes daily is to have the power to alter the fashion system' (2016: 23). Crewe (2018) analysis echoes this view, as she highlights how an individual's relationship to clothing moves beyond what the market can predict or dictate; meaning is acquired over time and in relation to place. Here, clothing has a social life of its own which is in part created with the wearer. Shifting the frame from consumer to user is a helpful conceptualisation. User-centric approaches, however, risk ignoring important dynamics related to social inequality and practices of consumption. Notions of consumer choice must be contextualised. McRobbie (1997) highlights how an individual's ability to engage with consumption will vary depending on their socio-economic status, as well as other features, such as ethnicity. She highlights that it is not only the worker who has been imagined but also the consumer, as female, white-skinned, and middle-class (McRobbie, 1997). McRobbie (1997) argues that drawing attention to a multitude of social features and social restraints across various sites of both consumption and production creates opportunity to disrupt such binary and homogenised understandings.

In the context of fast-fashion consumption, Pham (2017) critiques anti-fast-fashion efforts as ill-informed and misguided; targeting fast-fashion consumers, she argues, ignores structural inequality amongst consumer groups, and essentially blames working-class consumers for causing social and environmental disasters associated with the industry. Through this critique, anti-fast-fashion activists are understood as supporting strategic actions geared toward preventing consumers from buying fast-

fashion products. If capital is positioned as central to political consumerism, social movement strategists risk excluding individuals who lack the means to alter their consumption practices. Here, efforts are critiqued for associating a cost with care. Not only would it be a misnomer to associate fast-fashion companies and brands alone with social and environmental disasters, as high-cost fashion companies are also associated with such grievances, but such strategies also risk undermining efforts from workers on the ground (Pham, 2017). These are questions of accessibility and affordability relating to how an individual's socioeconomic status impacts their ability to engage in ethical behaviour.

With responsible consumption gaining mainstream attention, Neilson (2010) questions whether consumers engage in such practices as boycotting or buycotting as a question of morality, or whether there are other factors involved. According to Seidman (2007), consumers looking to connect fashion to their values make up a relatively small group, and although they may be selective in how they engage with the market, convenience plays a deciding role: 'it is much easier to persuade consumers to support a boycott if the goods involved are luxuries, or ones for which there are easy substitutes, than to ask them to engage in real sacrifice' (2007: 31). Lines between boycotts and buycotts appear blurry, but they are not the only tools in the political consumerist's toolkit. Political consumerism can also be discursive and include support for 'voluntary simplicity' (Crane, 2010), through practices of 'slow fashion' (Fletcher and Grose, 2011), for example. Balsiger (2014a) considers boycotts and buycotts as just two tactics operating along a continuum of multiple strategies promoting political consumerism, both contentious and not. Tactics can be denunciatory or supportive, and even strive to promote certain markets and behaviour (Balsiger, 2014a). Moreover, multiple tactics may be used in tandem, placing a spotlight not only on companies but also on state institutions and on consumer behaviour. Scholars supporting responsible fashion and apparel production and consumption propose various strategies (Fletcher and Tham, 2014b), including awareness of dynamics of class and gender (Aspers and Godart, 2013; Entwistle, 2015; Entwistle, 2014; McRobbie, 1997; Parker, 2014). Yet social and environmental challenges are generally framed in relation to product supply chains,

with power for change resting in practices of consumption and production understood through notions of supply and demand under the logic of capitalism.

Political consumerism in the form of boycotts, buycotts and discursive political consumerism—which relates to the communicative practices of opinions related to businesses (Micheletti and Stolle, 2008)—assumes that consumers hold power over companies, to influence and shape their practices. Polletta and Jasper (2001) argue political consumerism appeals to both individual and collective consumer identity, relating to ‘an individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution’ (2001: 285). Collective action in the form of boycotts and buycotts enter social movement thinking as ‘efforts by activists to transform the social order’ (Kozinets and Handelman, 2004: 691). In the context of the RFA movement, strategies for political consumerism emerge in response to new patterns of production and consumption under capitalism (Brooks, 2007; Seidman, 2007).

Subversion of market forces exists in various forms, and practices of consumption are a tool of both domination and resistance. Yet commodity consumption is mainly understood in binary terms: either (1) as a tool of the privileged to contemplate and exercise morality with the knowledge of their own connectivity to others, or (2) as a system where ‘ordinary people resist, subvert and creatively appropriate dominant cultural registers of consumerism’ (Barnett et al., 2011: 2). Barnett et al. (2011) critiques polarised understandings as unhelpful, arguing they ignore important context; without attention to context, commodity consumption is reduced to a mere ‘causal calculation of causes and effects’ (2011: 4). Essentialist consumption frames are found within transnational efforts when consumers in the Global North are misleadingly told that their purchase will directly impact the lives of workers in the Global South—that Western consumers either help or hinder workers through the commodities they buy. Yet, political consumerism promises opportunities for consumers to confront challenges, signal resistance, and showcase a hunger for change.

3.5 Conclusion

This review of related literature reveals that investigations into the relationship between social and environmental issues at work across the global fashion and apparel industry and the transnational efforts in place to address them, have generally considered material culture and practices of political fashion and apparel consumerism in terms of supply chain logistics under the logic of capitalism: as a linear, standardised system. From social movement tactics such as processes of issue prioritization and framing, to government policies and strategies for engagement through CSR, critiques have historically accused transnational efforts of not only failing to address structural inequalities but also for working to reinforce them (Brooks, 2002, 2007; Chowdhury, 2009; Kabeer, 2000; Kabeer and Mahmud, 2004; Ruwanpura and Roncolato, 2006; Seidman, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2011; Siddiqi, 2000, 2009, 2011; White, 2002). These assessments are generally anchored to notions of production and consumption through a lens of supply and demand. The result is an absence of research into the nature of transnational efforts which aim to move beyond market forces.

The global culture industry approach offers some insights which are helpful toward unravelling transnational RFA movement efforts, fashion-related or otherwise. Understanding objects as moving in non-linear social systems and processes, permeating everyday life, tensions related to power and agency within fashion and apparel industries, and other industries, are more pervasive than ever before. While understanding agency in terms of processes of reflexivity explains how individuals may negotiate decision-making processes under globalisation, attention to structural inequalities in relation to such issues as gender and class, for example, is lacking. The result is a series of calls to action: instead of top-down campaigns and strategies, calls for a strengthening of local institutions; instead of market-driven efforts, calls for a transnational efforts detached from the logic of capitalism; instead of placing workers and consumers into binary, opposing categories, calls for more nuanced understandings which contextualise lived experiences in ways which are cognisant to social inequalities; instead of calls for labour rights, calls for the safety of workers, the planet, and the emotional security of consumers, seeking to challenge market

forces and practice self-expression. With these calls, come more questions: in the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse, are transnational efforts attuned to these tensions? Are fashion-based efforts distinct from conventional approaches? What role, if any, can ‘fashion’ play within the movement? Do notions of fashion support or confound solidarities?

Once perceived as unworthy of attention, interest in fashion research is growing. In part, this is due to understandings which connect the global fashion and apparel industry to countless social and environmental grievances; fast-fashion companies and by extension fast-fashion consumers, have been implicated in the Rana Plaza collapse for their role in producing and consuming an endless rotation of fashionable items. To make sense of elite RFA movement stakeholder efforts in the wake of the collapse, a multi-mediated approach to research methodologies is required—one which is capable of navigating the multi-mediated nature of the fashion and apparel industry (McRobbie, 2016). My approach begins with an online analysis of FashRev, the global fashion-based SMO born in the wake of the collapse to organise and coordinate pro-fashion efforts to address social and environmental issues across the global fashion and apparel industry. FashRev interests, aims, and efforts, do not reflect the entire RFA landscape. Rather, FashRev represents a unique pro-fashion subsection of the wider RFA community. In tending to FashRev, important distinctions between fashion-based efforts and the conventional efforts of TLR organisations, governments and corporations, emerges. In the second phase of the research, I conduct 42 interviews with elite RFA stakeholders from across the movement, engaged in various efforts in multiple locations, from London to Dhaka. In a global culture industry approach, garment workers and fashion and apparel consumers alike do not fit neatly into binary, homogenous categories. Neither do the transnational individuals and organisations driving efforts to support worker safety in Bangladesh, and elsewhere. Applying a multi-mediated approach, a more nuanced understanding of transnational efforts in operation throughout the RFA movement landscape post-Rana Plaza emerges, one which includes and sheds light on fashion-based efforts.

Chapter 4 Methodology

I applied to the University of Edinburgh for a PhD in sociology at the end of 2011. My dissertation proposal sought to unpack the effects of transnational regulatory networks in apparel production and located Bangladesh as an appropriate unit of analysis for case study research. I was accepted into the program with a Sept 2012 start date but deferred my studies by one year. I had secured work as a program coordinator for an environmental non-profit organisation in Vancouver, Canada, and felt that I should take time to build a small financial safety net before embarking on a PhD. It was during that year of PhD research deferral that Rana Plaza collapsed.

I first heard word of the disaster through a private Facebook message from a friend. The message was sent via BBC News through my friend's mobile using an iPhone application:

BBC News: Building collapses in Bangladesh

I saw this story on the BBC News iPhone App and thought you should see it:

Building collapses in Bangladesh

An eight-storey building collapses in the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka, leaving at least three people dead and more feared trapped, officials say.

Read more: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-22275597>

**** Disclaimer **** The BBC is not responsible for the content of this e-mail, and anything written in this e-mail does not necessarily reflect the BBC's views or opinions. Please note that neither the e-mail address nor name of the sender have been verified.

Facebook message received 24 April 2013, 7:36am

Pacific Standard Time (PST)

I responded to the message with a sad face emoticon, or emoji, to quickly express frustration (Lockyer, 2014). My friend replied by sharing a second news link, this time to an updated BBC News story covering the disaster, and then commented 'more Bangladesh problems.' His comment refers to previous private and public conversations we had shared about garment making and on the state of labour rights

in Bangladesh. It alludes to online activist projects I have both initiated and engaged with and work I have done encouraging friends and family to support the labour rights of garment workers.

I understand ‘the internet as part of everyday life’ (Gajjala, 2006: 179). That is, as part of the everyday in *my life*. I’m comfortable in online space, and I am, generally, always connected; I am never far away from my laptop, and always carry a smartphone. I use my phone to receive emails, including Google news alerts, and share content—both political and apolitical—with friends through websites and social networking sites. My ease and familiarity with content sharing online stems not only from personal use but also from my experience working in online activism. In 2009 I founded a free, open-source, online web-based project called Social Alterations with Nadira Lamrad, who was at that time working on her PhD in Hong Kong. We began with a seemingly simple plan: share research, collate resources and build curricula related to labour rights to help researchers and educators in both formal and informal learning environments drive investigations into responsible fashion forward, faster. Bangladesh featured in content we published at Social Alterations, and my experience in online activism drove me, in part, to pursue PhD research.

4.1 Research design and approach

The Rana Plaza collapse was by no means the first of its kind. However, the sheer magnitude of the destruction aided in mobilising diverse and divergent transnational stakeholders into collaborative projects. As a distinct event, Rana Plaza provided the space for an *unusual* or *extreme* embedded single-case study (Yin, 2014: 52), set apart from everyday actions of stakeholders engaged—either directly or indirectly—with the RFA movement landscape. In this chapter I will introduce the case study, describing the methodology and methods used to unpack the research, as well as the various strategies and tactics employed to navigate data collection. I will explain key research decisions made during fieldwork, discussing unique tensions and challenges faced within this process, and outline steps taken to overcome barriers in securing, analysing and writing up data collected.

The research design favours a social constructionist approach to knowledge claims. Understanding knowledge as produced through social interactions (Bryman, 2008), methods for data collection were selected to reflect the methodology employed. The overall methodological framework from which I situate my approach draws on research into material culture under the global culture industry, where cultural objects move across time and space in non-linear formations (Lash and Lury, 2007). Lash and Lury (2007) follow the life-course of objects with methodology drawn from the 'social life of things' (Appadurai, 1986). Investigating fashion micro-enterprises in Berlin, London, and Milan, McRobbie (2016) offers a critical reflection on methodological challenges sociologists may encounter throughout their research process and demonstrates how 'multi-mediated methodologies' are required. Researchers aiming to interview professionals working within the global fashion and apparel industry, as was the case for this project, must contend with logistical challenges associated with accessing elite stakeholders in an increasingly 'multi-mediated' landscape. Understanding the global fashion and apparel industry as multi-mediated means an awareness that elite stakeholders share information through official websites, press releases, and exclusive interviews published through various media channels and in various formats. This approach has also been used in material geography to justify the use of multi-sited ethnography (Cook and Harrison, 2007; Cook and Tolia-Kelly, 2012; Crewe, 2018).

A case study inquiry is an appropriate approach toward better understanding the issues at stake; not only for addressing the 'how' and 'why' questions but also for unpacking unique contemporary circumstances, using multiple data sources (Gray, 2009; Meyer, 2001; Yin, 2014). The research is an embedded single-case study, using (1) semi-structured interviews with elite RFA stakeholders, located both inside and outside of Bangladesh, as a primary source for data collection, supported by data collected through (2) a website analysis. Both interviews and online data collection led to opportunities for (3) direct and participant observation. Yin (2014) sites five key components for effective case study analysis: research questions, propositions, unit(s) of analysis, the logic that connects propositions to data collected, and necessary measures to make sense of the findings (Yin, 2014: 29). The decision to

undertake as a case study approach was guided by initial research questions. Prior to collecting any raw data, I hoped that case study research would provide insight on whether—and if so, how and why—fashion-based activism was distinct from other efforts at work within the RFA movement landscape. If determined to be distinct from movement colleagues, was fashion-based activism seen as helping or hurting other efforts, such as those calling strictly for an increase in the labour rights of garment workers? To answer these overarching questions, I constructed the following research questions, based on propositions informed by the literature review:

<i>Initial Research Questions</i>
How do events alter the interests and actions of social movement stakeholders?
How do social movement stakeholders impact one another through their actions?
How do markets and social movements overlap in a digital age?

Table 4.1: Initial Research Questions Guiding the Case Study

<i>Initial Propositions</i>
Events create opportunity for some social movement stakeholders while restricting opportunity for others
Stakeholder actions both help and hinder stakeholder actions and strategies
Digital media over-amplifies issues and events

Table 4.2: Case Study Propositions

I sought to learn from the experiences and perceived understandings of a diverse range of RFA movement stakeholders, all working on projects and programmes aimed at supporting Bangladeshi garment workers and securing increased labour rights, post-Rana Plaza.

The central research was concerned with the motivations and collective actions of individuals engaged in transnational fashion-based activism outside of Bangladesh—particularly in Europe, the UK and North America. Fashion-based activists are calling for a more responsible/sustainable fashion industry and are engaged in coordinated actions and efforts initiated by the Rana Plaza victims and survivors. While many of these collective actions take place online, using Twitter and Facebook, for example, offline actions have also taken place. Many are promoting alternative fashion products and systems. The research also sought to understand whether fashion-based activism taking place outside of Bangladesh made space for

labour rights voices from within the country. If so, did fashion and apparel stakeholders working to support labour rights within Bangladesh (NGOs, companies, civil society groups, and government agencies, etc.) believe forms of fashion-based activism from Western stakeholders worked to help or hinder their efforts within the country?

4.2 Data collection

As fashion-based activism as a concept is abstract, locating, or *bounding the case* was crucial for determining appropriate units for analysis, along with setting a clear timeline for the case, as well as for data collection (Yin, 2014: 33). Fashion Revolution (FashRev) is a fashion-based activist enterprise born in the aftermath of Rana Plaza. Organised under this umbrella registered company, fashion-based activists build and disseminate campaigns that call on fashion consumers to consider the social and environmental impacts of their wardrobe and to shop with their values. Players located within this collective value people, planet, profit and creativity with equal measure (Fashion Revolution, 2014f). The FashRev campaign website platform provided a research opportunity to define case boundaries, and its website was selected as a unit of analysis to identify and flag divergent, same-cause stakeholders, connected and/or disconnected to fashion-based activism; it is a niche activist subfield calling for responsible fashion that incorporates the labour rights of garment workers in Bangladesh. The 2014 FashRev website was my starting point to identify and access RFA stakeholders that would provide insight into fashion-based activism and its potential implications.

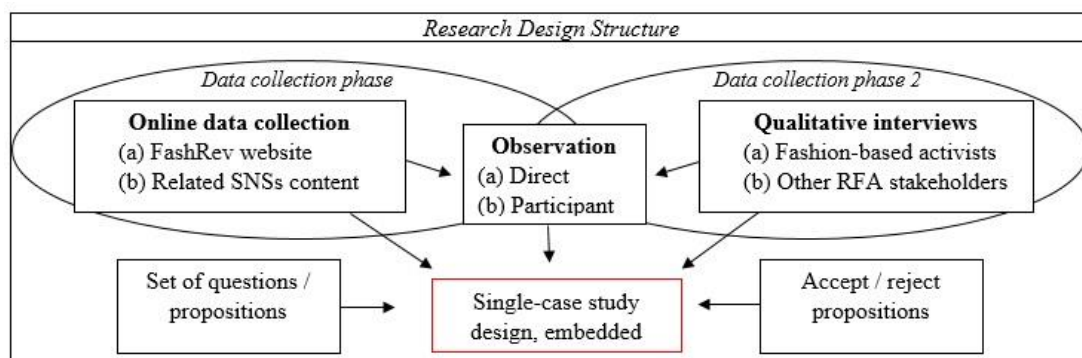
For a case study to be effective, multiple sources of data are required (Gray, 2009). Data was gathered in two phases: after conducting a website analysis of the 2014 FashRev website, I collated content from campaign-related SNSs. After completing the online data collection phase of the fieldwork, I moved to conduct semi-structured interviews. Data collected within the first phase would inform research decisions made in the next. The decision to carry out a two-phase process for data collection stemmed from an understanding that my own knowledge relating to the case would

grow and evolve within the data collection process, in addition to the data analysis and writing up stages of the overall project.

A two-tier approach was appropriate for three reasons. Practically, it enabled me to locate and identify ideal candidates to interview, without inferring generalisations based on my own previous experience working within the realm of fashion-based activism. In addition, it allowed me time and space to formulate appropriate questions for the second phase data collections. Finally, it created opportunities to flag any tensions between the offline perspectives of key stakeholders in relation to fashion-based activism and garment making in Bangladesh, and the actions and presentations of stakeholders online. Circumstances relating to the collapse, and consequently the actions of RFA movement stakeholders, remained in flux throughout the entire research process. The nature of the puzzle, therefore, called for a cautiously flexible style of research design. While this further justifies the case study approach, it supports the decision to collect data through two distinct phases.

Data Collection Timetable 2014/2015													
Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Phase 1: Online Data Collection													
						Phase 2: Qualitative Interviewing							

Table 4.3: Two-phase Data Collection Process, Timeline



Graphic 4.1: Case Study Design, Single/Embedded. Adapted from Gray (2009: 257)

4.2.1 Conducting interviews

The RFA stakeholders I encountered engaged with the movement in different terms, whether through a protest on the high street or from a stakeholder meeting in a corporate office, from a computer or on their mobile device. Elite RFA stakeholders interviewed included activists, as well as CSR contacts within fashion and apparel companies, CSR consultants, researchers, and stakeholders at civil society organisation. I have divided interviewees and informants into four distinct categories (Table 4.4). Like my conceptualisation of the RFA movement (see Chapter 2, section 2.4), these categories are not meant to be perfect (Swedberg, 2018). Just as it is challenging to define social movements (Crossley, 2002), it is difficult to contain RFA movement stakeholders into groupings. Interviews revealed that RFA movement stakeholders wear multiple hats, working across the global culture industry as boundary spanners. While RFA movement stakeholders associated with an organisation or company, through paid employment, for example, may appear easy enough to categorise as either an ‘industry-based’ or ‘organisation-based’ stakeholder, this is not the case. These stakeholders, for example, may work for or alongside companies and organisations full-time, on a project basis, or through various short-term and/or long-term partnerships (both formal and informal). At the same time, they may engage with the RFA movement in other ways, through protests, or through practices of political fashion and apparel consumerism. My categorisation of RFA movement stakeholders stems from research encounters: some participants made clear to me that ‘activist’ was not a term they felt comfortable being associated with—a consideration which has impacted how I refer to participants throughout the thesis. I refer to the types of projects and campaigns initiated and supported by RFA movement stakeholders as efforts, rather than ‘contentious actions’ (Tarrow, 2011), as certain stakeholder engagements took place in formal workplace settings through institutional channels.

Research Participant Categories: RFA movement interviewee and informant categorisations		
<i>Category</i>	<i>Acronym</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Fashion-based</i>	Fash	Fashion-based (Fash) RFA movement stakeholder interviewees were activists, designers, educators, entrepreneurs, organisers and researchers, all engaged in efforts that directly connected the labour rights of garment workers to notions of fashion, typically engaged with fashion as a creative industry. In the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse, fashion-based interviewees and informants were involved in supporting the labour rights of Bangladeshi garment workers in various ways. For these movement stakeholders, labour rights marked just one of many social and environmental challenges facing the global fashion and apparel industry—challenges they viewed as being intrinsically connected. Through their efforts, fashion-based interviewees drew linkages between social and environmental issues: Worker rights were tied to environmental concerns, and vice versa.
<i>Labour rights organisation-based</i>	Org	Labour rights organisation-based (Org) interviewees and informants worked at various types of TLR organisations and were engaged in efforts that supported consumer, industry, government, and worker reform. As activists, organisers and/or researchers, they worked on specific campaigns, policies, and programmes in response to Rana Plaza, all geared toward improving labour rights for garment workers in Bangladesh. Unlike fashion-based movement stakeholders, labour rights organisation-based stakeholders prioritised specific labour-related grievances ahead of environmental concerns.
<i>Industry-based</i>	Ind	Like their fashion-based and labour rights organisation-based movement colleagues, industry-based (Ind) stakeholders were geographically dispersed: some were based inside Bangladesh, while others worked regionally or further afield via a corporate or home office. These stakeholders worked directly with brands or retailers producing fashion and apparel products in Bangladesh either at the time of the Rana Plaza collapse or shortly thereafter. Industry-based RFA

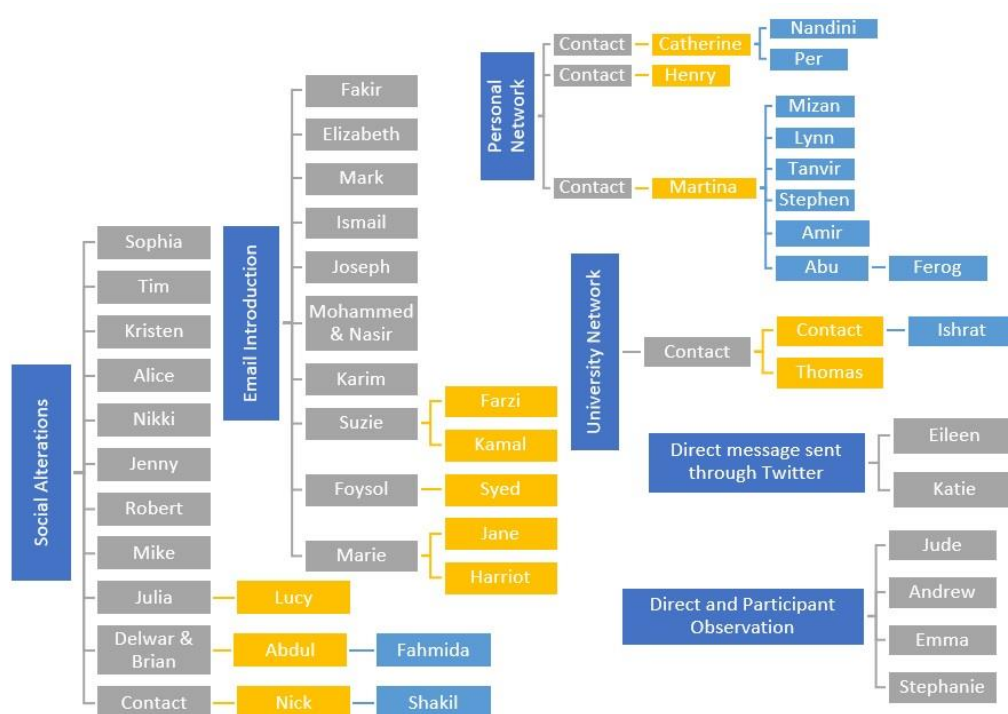
		movement interviewees and informants engaged with industry through departments working on corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, in a consultation capacity, or through various industry associations.
<i>Other-related</i>	Other	Other-related (Other) interviewees and informants worked in various capacities across the RFA movement. These stakeholders engaged with the movement as artists, consultants, educators, researchers and writers, and government officials, on projects and programmes related to the collapse, often in partnership with their Fash, Org, and Ind-based movement colleagues.

Table 4.4: Interviewee Categories

Although challenging to conceptually contain, by categorising research participants into analytic groupings, important distinctions emerged. Research participants employed by a company or TLR organisation fall under different categorizations. I have done this with the understanding that while the overall engagement of these stakeholders within the movement may not be bound to any one category, their involvement with the research project stemmed from their association with an employer, be that a TLR organisation or a high street fast-fashion company. Meanwhile, fashion-based stakeholders are set apart from their movement colleagues for their specific engagement with efforts which employ fashion as a tool to address social and environmental issues within the global fashion and apparel industry. Like their movement counterparts, fashion-based stakeholders may not be contained to a single category; while their overall engagement with the movement may involve working on projects in association with a company or organisation, their participation in the research project is the result of their involvement with efforts aimed at harnessing fashion as a device to confront social and environmental issues places these stakeholders in the fashion-based category for the purposes of this project. Fashion-based RFA movement stakeholders were creative professionals working within the creative fashion economy (McRobbie, 2016), often engaged with the movement as entrepreneurs. Stakeholders located in the final, other, category

engaged with the movement in important and significant ways but could not be captured by any of the groupings mentioned above.

My position as an RFA movement insider through Social Alterations, as well as my own personal connections, aided me in accessing potential research participants. Harnessing these networks, I also spoke with related stakeholders informally and off the record. When I lacked a direct connection, I secured interviews by introducing myself to key informants via email and through Twitter. I also gained access to relevant stakeholders by attending and participating in events in the UK (Glasgow and London) and in Bangladesh (Dhaka). In some cases, the networks overlapped, with multiple informants introducing me to specific individuals. The below charts map these encounters, connections and subsequent connections:



Graphic 4.2: Gaining access to research participants

Within the context of conducting research interviews, Jorgenson (1991) challenges dichotomies between *observer* and *observed*, noting an ‘emerging relatedness in the interview situation as each observes the other observing’ (1991: 210). Interactions

with interviewees began in advance of face-to-face encounters—which occurred in-person, virtually, via Skype, or both, in more than one instance—with formal requests for participation in the research taking place through email. In most cases email exchanges were brief, focused on practical details, such as arranging the day and time the interview would take place, exchanging contact details (Skype usernames, telephone numbers, office addresses, and sometimes even directions, etc.). Email exchanges were also an opportunity to send forward confidentiality forms for consideration and signatures, as well as share any additional information related to the overall theses, at the request of interviewees. A few emails involved the exchange of personal details, however, which may expand space for interviewee/interviewer observations: where interviewees, for example, shared they were recovering from surgery, illness or exhaustion from campaign activity, or where scheduled interviews were delayed due to demand from workloads or childcare. I too, at times, disclosed personal details in advance of the interview encounter. In one instance, I requested to meet a participant at a café for coffee, instead of a restaurant for lunch, as the interviewee had originally suggested, explaining I had to follow a strict diet due to coeliac disease and would not be able to eat during the interview.⁸ Interviews took place between April 2014 and November 2015, after completing the first phase of the data collection process. Interviewees were selected for interview based on (1) their connection to the FashRev network, (2) their position within the wider RFA movement landscape, or (3) at the suggestion of a fellow interviewee. Questions directed at participants were broadly constructed and used only as a guide to allow space for capturing additional information (Creswell, 2003). While most of the interviewees answered each question, each was encouraged to discuss/address any issues they thought would be most relevant.

⁸ As someone with coeliac disease—an auto-immune disease that requires a strict gluten-free diet—I am not able to eat at restaurants without extreme caution. While I do not normally eat in restaurants, due to the risk of digesting any gluten-containing ingredients through cross-contamination, I am less likely to eat out when I am in an unfamiliar space, or when circumstances require my complete focused and attention, free from distraction or illness.

Interview Schedule

1. How did you come to work on (insert association/company/organisation/etc.) and how you would describe that work now?
2. Is the concept of ‘fashion’ important in this work?
3. What would you say are your top priorities when working in this space?
4. What about short-term and long-term goals?
5. You were active in this space before Rana Plaza collapsed, and I wondered if anything changed for you and/or your work when the building collapsed on 24 of April 2013.
6. Through your work with (insert association/company/organisation/etc.), you have worked with many different stakeholders and stakeholder groups. What draws you to work with, or partner with particular stakeholders and stakeholder groups?
7. You have worked with [insert fashion-based activist project, such as Fashion Revolution]. Why did you get involved with the project?
8. Do you feel fashion activism, from groups such as Fashion Revolution and others, support the work that you do, in terms of supporting the short- and long-term goals you have outlined?
9. When you work for (insert association/company/organisation/etc.) and other projects, are you working as an employee, a volunteer, as an activist, or...? How would you describe that work?
10. Your own work in (insert association/company/organisation/etc.) may operate in online space—using internet tools such as social media, etc. How important would you say online activism is? In your view, does online activism make waves offline?

Table 4.5: Interview Schedule

I made clear to participants that there were no right answers to these questions; the interview was meant to be open, allowing space for the interviewee to move freely through the schedule, at their own will, and pace. The schedule was there as a guide, designed to draw out data that will provide insight into the research questions. I allowed respondents to derail from the schedule, while simultaneously working to bring the interview ‘back on track’ where appropriate. Research participants are at risk of exposing their business and work to criticism, if found not in compliance with workplace standards, for example. As a result, some data gathered from stakeholders may be ‘coached’ content, framed to align, consciously or unconsciously, with a

particular set of motivations (Lund-Thomsen, 2013). As McRobbie (2016) has noted, in her research into the fashion industry through a global culture industry approach, it is increasingly common for elite fashion and apparel stakeholders to exclusively share information related to their efforts with specific media outlets, such as in an interview with an online fashion magazine, or in a documentary film. A flexible interview strategy allowed space for the diversity within and between individual interviewees to emerge, bringing the context surrounding individual motives and actions to the foreground.

As the many of candidates selected for interview were based outside of Edinburgh, the majority of interviews were conducted via Skype or telephone, and where possible interviews were recorded with permission from interviewees.⁹ Like Hanna (2012), I understand Skype to be a useful tool in applying a flexible approach to semi-structured interviews. Where research participants are concerned with environmental issues related to climate change, Skype and telephone interviewing also presents a seemingly more environmentally friendly option, as transportation is avoided (Hanna, 2012). Moreover, Skype and telephone interviewing are affordable options when seeking to interview individuals based in multiple geographic locations. With many of my interviewees based in Dhaka, I travelled to Bangladesh for in-person meetings, where I also worked to identify additional potential candidates for an interview where appropriate.

While interviews were conducted in English, there were at least three formal encounters during fieldwork in Bangladesh related to the research, where translation was required. In the first instance, while visiting the Benarasi weavers in Mirpur, I was approached by a small group of working men who wanted to share their story. My informant Abu, who had arranged for me to see the weaving, translated dialogue between myself and the men for approximately 10 minutes, and I wrote field notes immediately after the encounter:

⁹ Three interviewees requested that their interviews not be recorded. When recorded, audio files were not fully transcribed. Rather, they were partially transcribed and converted into analytic notes. Where recording was not possible, extensive notes were produced.

The men told Abu that they work 12-14 hours per day, weaving the saris. They are paid per piece, and it takes them approximately seven days to make one sari. I learned that the amount each weaver makes depends on the design of the sari. One man said he would make 2500 for the sari he was weaving. Another man said he would make 4000 for the one on his machine. The machines are powered by foot pedals made of bamboo.

One man I met had worked there for 40 years. He started when he was seven years old as an apprentice, learning and watching. Now they say he is an 'engineer' because of his knowledge of the sari weaving, and of the machines. I am told that if a machine encounters a problem, he will fix it.

Four other men gathered and began to explain to my guide that the difficulties they face as Benarasi living in Bangladesh. They come from Muslim families that left India for Bangladesh after partition in 1949. When Bangladesh gained independence from Pakistan in 1971, they were labelled Pakistani and were not granted Bangladeshi ID cards.

They told my guide that the Bangladeshi government has since provided ID to them, but they cannot obtain passports. They are seen as Pakistani refugees from India, and not as Bengali.

Field notes, 27 July 2015

The second encounter where I required assistance with translation was at a labour rights press conference and worker rally in Dhaka. As the speakers at the event addressed the audience in Bengali, an informant translated at my ear in real-time. The speech introduced the organisation hosting the rally, of which I was already familiar. A third encounter where translation was helpful took place on the drive between Dhaka and Savar, which can take up to 2 hours in heavy traffic. Visiting the site of the Rana Plaza collapse prompted the informant I was travelling with, Abu, and our driver, Abanish, to informally discuss the disaster in Bengali. Although both Abu and Abanish spoke English, Abanish's ability was limited. During the long drive home, Abu translated Abanish's personal insight on the tragedy, recounting that day and his feelings on the collapse. I did not take fieldnotes, as it felt too personal of an exchange.

4.2.2 Fieldwork

In Bangladesh I was supported by a network of personal contacts from Canada in ways I did not predict, extending research support beyond the network of contacts I had secured from research informants, and, in some instances, reinforcing connections. At the start of my fieldwork, a friend of a friend, informed me that her older sister had moved to Dhaka to work for the Canadian government. I emailed my acquaintance to inquire if her sister had any leads on accommodation, and immediately heard back that I was welcome to stay with her sister for the duration of my trip. She also informed me that I would have access to her car and could ask her driver to drive me to interviews during the day while she was at work—I would only need to pay for the gas. Staying with her meant I stayed in the Gulshan district, which is known as one of the diplomatic zones of Dhaka. This was convenient for both informal and formal access to informants. Her assistance in Bangladesh extended beyond accommodation and transportation, and she became a close friend.

What should you wear to an event to address and discuss garment workers' rights? What should you wear to interview a responsible fashion and apparel stakeholder about responsible fashion? At first glance, these questions may not seem very important. Some research participants noticed what I was wearing and asked for details. I noticed what others were wearing, but (mostly) did not ask. On one occasion I could recognise that the blouse an interviewee was wearing had come from a high street fast-fashion company. It wasn't during the interview that I recognised the blouse, but two days later, when I was inside the shop. It was on sale for £4, and I found myself wondering if the interviewee had bought it on sale or paid full price, or perhaps picked it up at a second-hand shop. On two occasions, I conducted interviews wearing an item of clothing purchased from the very company I was interviewing.

Throughout the course of the fieldwork, I attended a wide range of events and encounters, from research interviews in the UK to workshops and seminars, protests and film screenings. For most of these, I wore my usual clothing—black pants and black boots, both purchased on the Edinburgh high street, along with my go-to 'professional' looking black suit jacket, purchased at a second-hand shop in

Vancouver, Canada. Although I never diarised my outfit choices throughout my fieldwork, this was my ‘usual’ attire, because it required that I only change my top, which can then be tailored to suit any given event. In Bangladesh, however, I wore clothing I would not normally wear in my everyday life. There, I paired baggy pants and a long salwar kameez with a scarf wrapped across my chest and shoulders. I had two pairs of each and rotated between them throughout my time in Dhaka. Although I may have worn clothing I would not normally have worn while conducting fieldwork in the UK, I was no less conscious of making the wrong impression.

4.2.3 Online data collection and analysis tools

My previous experience working with stakeholders within the RFA landscape has heightened my ability to navigate its networks. I am acutely aware, however, that any advantage comes wrapped in a unique set of ethical issues that must be considered. In coding for themes during analysis, I was sensitive to the influence my background working within this niche fashion subfield have had in shaping my views and understandings related to the research and research questions and propositions. I embraced this tension, however, by seeking alternative and counter views within the data collected.

While the majority of data used for analysis was collected manually, I utilized digital data collection software to assist in gathering necessary content for analysis from websites and from relevant social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. For assistance in organising and analysing data, I used NVivo 10 for Windows (QSR International, 2014). I relied on NVivo mostly for data storage purposes, as I felt that analysis was smoother using Word. Although I created codebooks in NVivo, engaging with the material through Word documents—creating graphics, timelines, maps, writing, and rewriting my analysis—Word allowed for a more iterative process of analysis.

4.2.3.1 Website Analysis

To engage with the digital data a meaningful way, I gathered content published on the FashRev website between 1 August 2013, and 1 August 2014, a one-year period. With methodologies surrounding website analysis in flux (Bryman, 2008), it is

necessary for researchers undertaking website research to exercise patience when challenged by change. Researchers of website content will face (1) internal change from within the field of e-research, with respect to the discovery of new methods of data extraction for analysis and any potential ethical concerns these may bring, and also (2) external change from the data itself, with website content 'at risk' of unannounced modifications (Bryman, 2008). The rapid growth and speed of change in the web accentuate these kinds of problems for social researchers who are likely to feel that the experience is like trying to hit a target that not only continually moves is in a constant state of metamorphosis. The crucial issue is to be sensitive to the limitations of the use of websites as material that can be content analysed, as well as to the opportunities they offer (Bryman, 2008: 631).

While it may not be uncommon for qualitative researchers to discover and work through unanticipated research challenges, researchers engaged in online analysis must be particularly vigilant. I understand technology—in both development and use—to be a product of social context. Through this lens, I view information and communication technologies (ICTs) as situated within unique social circumstances. Data was collected online through the FashRev 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 website as well as the social networking sites (SNSs) Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, as these were connected to the campaign as a means for network communication. SNSs are web-based platforms that connect internet users across geographic boundaries, enabling would-be otherwise strangers to interact in virtual space, sharing stories, images etc. SNSs allow users to engage in multiple forms of communication simultaneously, what is shared on one platform can be shared on another. While SNSs support communication, they also work to actively restrict certain interactions (Baym, 2010: 17).

The 2014 FashRev website was not itself a SNS. Unlike Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, FashRev website users do not have the option of creating a unique FashRev account or profile for unique user experience. What the FashRev site does, however, is support SNS users from such platforms as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to connect with one another in sharing FashRev related content. SNS users are encouraged to use unique hashtags online to locate campaign allies and share

content related to the company's organisational goals and interests. Connected through hashtags, they can follow one another and engage in public or private conversations or debates. The nature of digital photography and online photo sharing through SNSs allows for photo manipulation in a number of ways, impacting ways in which viewers might understand and consume the image (Goldstein, 2007). Debates surrounding questions of honesty in photography are not new (Goldstein, 2007). In visual research, anonymisation can be challenging (Wiles et al., 2010). While website analysis includes the examination of website embedded visual materials—such images and/or videos embedded into blog posts, for example—it also requires the analysis of visual qualities, or visual markers, such as web page structure. Without cautious analysis these indicators may reveal the identity of a website and with that the identity of any or all research participants involved with the website. Controlling anonymity in website analysis is further complicated when considering links to evidence through URLs.

According to Flanagin and Metzger (2008), with reference to geographic information, the offering-up of voluntary information in online spaces is problematic, with matters of authenticity brought into question. There is a 'context deficit' at work (Flanagin and Metzger, 2008: 140), and this is a potential concern not only with campaign content but also with biographical information of campaign staff.

According to della Porta and Mosca (2009), this is also a concern with organisational structure. Regarding the 'grounding' of online space, Schradie (2011) has shown that the digital divide exists even within geographic locations, where the production of online—even where online access is not a challenge—remains fragmented by such structural inequalities as education and class. The term cyberspace implies a 'placeless space' (Rogers, 2013: 23), with Web tools capable of locating user and producer geographic location, however, the internet is far from placeless (Rogers, 2013).

During direct observation in Bangladesh through both formal and informal interactions with interviewees and informants, I found that Facebook was a popular way to communicate amongst Bangladeshis. Interviewees in Bangladesh flagged not only Facebook but also Twitter as an emerging space for intergroup communication;

one informant disclosed that cell phones, with cameras and Facebook enabled applications, were used as a tool for workers to take photos of the brand labels of the clothing they were producing, and share these photos with allies on Facebook.

4.2.4 Participant observation

Participant observation was used as a tool to access and connect with activists so that I might visually establish myself within the network as a labour rights ally and ultimately secure contact information and follow-up with a request for the research interview. I participated in events in both the UK and in Bangladesh, including on the second anniversary of the Rana Plaza building collapse, when I travelled to London, England to participate in memorial events organised by organisations connected to fashion-based efforts.



Image 4.1: Memorial event, outside of the Gap on Oxford Street, London, 23 April 2015 7:00 pm. War on Want is on the megaphone addressing the crowd, speaking of capitalism and corporate greed.



Image 4.2: Memorial event participant holds Bangladesh's NGWF flag, London, 23 April 2015

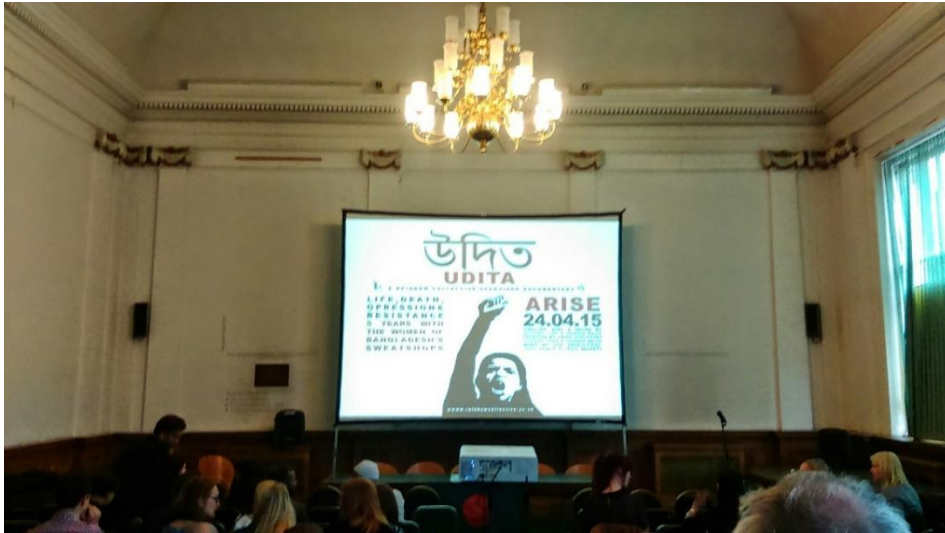


Image 4.3: Screening of documentary film UDITA at UNITE venue in East London, 24 April 2015

As Yin (2014) notes, direct observation may involve planned encounters, but also observations made while collecting data via other means, for example, observations based on conditions detected during the interview experience. In at least one instance in Dhaka, attending a gathering meant an invitation to another; research participants in Bangladesh included me in their efforts, even gifting me a sari to wear at an event as an act of solidarity. By attending events, I was able to secure contact details for interviews with key RFA movement stakeholders based in the UK, I may otherwise not have been able to access. I was also able to demonstrate my commitment to the research.

4.3 Ethics in researching RFA movement efforts, online and offline

The research fell under Level 1 of the University of Edinburgh's *Research Ethics* assessment (The University of Edinburgh, 2014b). Regarding both the collection of data and use of data collected for analysis, I followed the 'Ten steps to responsible use of personal data', and adhered to the eight 'Data Protection Principles' for accountable data collection, as recommended by the University of Edinburgh's *Data Protection Guidance for Student Research Projects* (The University of Edinburgh, 2014a). I followed the *Statement of Professional Ethics* issued by the Canadian Sociological Association (CSA) (Canadian Sociological Association, 2014), as well

as the British Sociological Association's *Statement of Ethical Practice* (British Sociological Association, 2004). While acknowledging that research ethics surrounding the use of the internet materials for data collection and analysis is constantly evolving, the collection and analysis of online data followed the Association of Internet Researchers Ethics Guidelines (AoIR Ethics Working Committee, 2012).

There is messiness, however, in confidentiality when working in and between online and offline landscapes. The consent form (see Appendix F) asked research participants to acknowledge that they understood the purpose of my research and explained all information collected would be confidential. Although the form did not state that the research participants' involvement with the project would be confidential, I made every effort to avoid disclosing names of connections. This was particularly challenging when interviewees—in efforts to connect me with colleagues—made direct inquiries.

Suzie: *Who are you going to meet in Bangladesh?*

MH: *Well I'm not sure yet, I'm still kind of, trying to work that out [...] so if you have any contacts, that you'd like me to...*

Suzie: *You should definitely go and meet with Farzi, and I can send you a couple of emails. Kamal will be happy to see you. I will drop you their email as well.*

When online connections come offline, by, for example, sending a public Tweet mentioning our meeting, or when offline contacts moved online, with Facebook friend requests followed by uploaded photos they have tagged you in, confidentiality becomes an issue. Even when it became clear that the research network was not something that could stay completely hidden, I continued to support confidentiality as much as possible.

4.3.1 Reflexivity and positionality

Through a social constructionist research lens, I am called to question my role within the research at every opportunity. According to Steier (1991), claiming that ‘the research process itself must be seen as socially constructing a world of worlds, with the researchers included in, rather than outside, the body of their own research’ (1991: 2). To ensure that data collection and analysis would not be compromised by my own bias, or by the intentions of movement stakeholders, it was essential that I clearly communicate my motivations for conducting the research, as well as any plans for research outputs, at every opportunity. This was done through a consent form shared with informants ahead of the research interview via email, where possible. Space was also provided before, throughout and at the end of the interview for informants to ask any lingering questions about the research and/or to raise any concerns they might have. Clearly communicating research intentions when requesting interviews via email provided an opportunity for informants to flag limitations in their own capacity in participation:

Mike: *Happy to speak to you about Bangladesh, but I would stress that we have a very small presence in the country.*

At times, clarification took place ahead of interviews through email exchanges:

To start, could you please send me some additional information on your current research (hypothesis, research questions etc.) and your view on how you see [company name] fitting into that. If you have your interview questions in a format you can share, that would also be helpful. This is so I can better judge if I’m the right person for you to meet or if someone else at [company name] might be better equipped to assist you.

- Email exchange with potential research participant

Reflexivity within this approach pays attention to alternative perspectives, as communicated through shared language within social interactions (Gergen and Gergen, 1991). My position as both an insider and an outsider to the research created an at time messy research environment. As an insider, I gained access to informants

that might otherwise not have engaged with the research project due to time restraints:

Julia: *We get so many requests from students and people wanting to interview. Um. You know, in your case it's a little bit different because you have given so much to the movement and you're part of the movement, but quite often there's not that, it's like really just a take. It just becomes too much, you know, you don't have the time.*

In some cases, I relied on informants to introduce me to contacts for an interview. My position in the network aided in this process. Framed as a boundary spanner, however, informant introductions brought new research challenges forward; movement stakeholders were often managing busy schedules and taking time to participate in research had to make practical sense. This was evidenced to me in a private email exchange between informants that had been forwarded to me, indicating I could move forward and contact a particular informant:

I just spoke to Mary Hanlon. She's coordinated (voluntarily) an online platform from Canada called Social Alterations for years now and has been very supportive of [organisation's name redacted] work and workers' rights over the years.

She's now doing a PhD in Edinburgh around Bangladesh, workers' rights and social movements, focusing on online activism. I thought there could be some synergy - perhaps there's a piece of work around the impact of online activism that would be useful to her and to [name of organisation redacted]. If you're at all interested, I'll get her to email you directly and you can have a conversation.

- Part of an email exchange between research participants forwarded to me.

As Mason (2002) asserts, 'a researcher cannot be neutral, or objective, or detached, from the knowledge and evidence they are generating' (2002: 6). I have played an active role in the co-production, or co-construction, of the knowledge presented throughout the thesis (Jorgenson, 1991). Although I attempted to practice reflexivity throughout each phase of the research—by writing and revisiting field notes, for

example, and by discussing the data collection process and initial findings with colleagues through informal meetings, as well as formal channels, such as via presentations within professional conference and workshops settings—it has been a messy process. I am aware that interviewees and informants may have approached me and my research questions differently than they may have done so with an RFA movement outsider.

I am a white, middle-class, Canadian woman, conducting research in my early 30's as an international student at the University of Edinburgh. The first woman in my family to undertake graduate-level research. I view myself as a labour rights activist (Appendix G). Others within the RFA movement may see me otherwise. While my experience in labour rights activism has shaped my understanding of opportunities in work and collaborative learning in online space, there are significant limitations to online activism. Internet technology can facilitate dialogue and knowledge exchange, by creating space for otherwise absent voices to be heard, while at the same time work to actively restrict the very voices of those individuals framed as central to the campaign. Baym (2010) asserts '[w]ho is excluded from or enabled by digitally mediated interaction is either random nor inconsequential' (2010: 21). Accessing information through cyberspace is crucial for activists, consumers and companies alike, working to facilitate and at the same time restrict both internal and external communications. Is the internet a part of everyday life for Bangladeshi labour rights stakeholders? Are garment worker voices in Bangladesh plugged into the fashion activist movement, and, if so, to what extent?

The FashRev campaign sites (website, including blog, and social media sites) embody transnationalism. The sites are designed to bring together diverse stakeholders, people and institutions, across various countries. Transnational online activism on behalf of garment worker rights is not new. However, '[w]hile many political activists consider the internet to be a fast, efficient and inexpensive way to build coalitions and campaigns, there is some doubt as to whether cyberspace can truly represent a global civil society' (Law, 2003: 239). Gajjala (2006) asks: 'what is at stake, for who and why, in producing/inhabiting/consuming digital diasporas?' (2006: 181). What, then, is at stake for Bangladeshi garment workers? Do they have

a seat at the internet table, and, more importantly, are they speaking for themselves? It was therefore important that I pay attention to digital divides.

4.3.2 Researcher personality and its impact on research design and collection

Moser (2008) notes how individual researcher personalities, with unique biographies and emotional and social qualities, can impact not only the overall researcher experience but also the ways in which research participants engage with the research. I believe my involvement speaks to my *personality*, as much as it does to my *positionality*; my personality is embedded within my positionality and cannot be separated. I am aware that any significant separation between myself as an academic research student and myself as, essentially, a self-appointed online activist, is, in practical terms, unrealistic. Still, it is important to acknowledge the role both my personal biography and personality can play in influencing the perceptions of my positionality when conducting fieldwork:

Feeling nervous, but also very alert. Feels like I'm ready. Waiting to travel to Dhaka—waiting for the right time in the fieldwork stage, waiting for my [travel] visa—the waiting has been the hardest thing so far. I'm exhausted from waiting! I'm just ready to be there and to experience Dhaka for myself. I've read so many accounts—news and media stories, academic journal articles, stories from other researchers [...]. It will be great.

Field notes, 10 July 2015

This desire to experience Dhaka had stemmed from ten months of fieldwork. Before travelling to Bangladesh, I had collected online data, engaged in direct and participant observation in online and offline space, and conducted dozens of in-depth interviews with elite informants in person and online via Skype, telephone and Viber to Canada, Europe, the United States, the United Kingdom and Bangladesh. When informants based outside of Bangladesh learned I would be travelling to Dhaka as part of my fieldwork, opinions were shared, and advice was offered:

Julia: *I struggled in Bangladesh [...] I didn't want to go back again.*

MH: *I'm only going for a month this time. If I need to go back again I will.*

- Julia: *A month is a long time.*
- Stephanie: *Where are you going to stay?*
- MH: *Well I have a friend of a friend whose family works with the Canadian government. They've offered me a room in their house. It's in the Gulshan District.*
- Stephanie: *Oh nice [...] I think Gulshan and Banani are the nicer bits of Dhaka, and I think you'll appreciate living in a nicer bit. It's a hard-core city. It's crazy. Okay, that's good that you've got somewhere to stay.*

I had travelled to South East Asia and lived abroad in Taiwan and Mexico. While these sample comments from informants provided some insight into their own emotions, comfort and experience with travel Bangladesh, they did not impact my understanding of what travelling to Bangladesh might entail:

When I say I am feeling nervous, how nervous? Why? I'm nervous for a lot of reasons. I'm nervous I won't do enough when I get there, that I won't see enough people, connect with the 'right' people. I'm nervous about travelling as a coeliac. I'm nervous in my mind about it—not in my body. Though sometimes the mind can make the body sick—and I'm hoping that won't happen.

Field notes, 10 July 2015

I wasn't worried about experiencing any physical danger, for example.¹⁰ I was feeling nervous about food consumption, and about travelling as a coeliac. More than that, I was worried about encountering food during the research process. Conscious of the unique positionality I bring to this research project, and the ways in which aspects of this positionality may be interpreted by research participants, I maintained transparency by contextually situated myself within the RFA landscape in all communication with all project stakeholders. The gluten-free diet was not a choice I made, but a requirement for my health and wellbeing, and as a result, for successful fieldwork. During the first phase of my research fieldwork, I developed an online

¹⁰ Approximately one year after completing fieldwork in Bangladesh, Dhaka experienced the 'Gulshan Attack'. This event drastically changed the security situation for some Canadians working at the High Commission of Canada, particularly the contacts I was in touch with. The Government placed a travel advisory against all non-essential travel for Canadians to Bangladesh. The travel ban was still in place at the time writing (Government of Canada, 2018).

reference library and blog sharing resources relating to illness, disclosing myself as a social science researcher with coeliac disease. This web-based project is linked to my academic profile, which was shared with all formal research participants in advance of the interview.¹¹ My character was not the only personality at work throughout the research, however; the personalities of the research participants themselves will inevitably be present during data collection and analysis. Individuals may express personality through self-defining stories (Moser, 2008), as research participants position themselves within the network unit of analysis. As Mullings (1999) notes, efforts by researchers to practice reflexivity in efforts to neutralize power relations will inevitably fail; researchers cannot control how they will be perceived by others, whose own positionality is likely as complex as that of the researcher.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented an overview of the research design and approach adopted to understand the transnational efforts of elite RFA movement stakeholders in the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse. Sociologists investigating a multi-mediated industry such as fashion and apparel under the global culture industry face practical challenges, with respect to containing the research as well as gaining access to specific individuals and locations (McRobbie, 2016). To address these challenges, a flexible strategy with respect to research methods is required. Applying a single-case study approach which focused on RFA movement efforts which emerged post-Rana Plaza, I collected data in two phases, across various geographic locations, using multiple sources. I began online, collecting data from the Fashion Revolution website and related web-based tools. I then moved offline, where I interviewed key figures from across the movement, as well as attended and participated in meetings and events in relation to the collapse. My engagement with elite transnational RFA movement stakeholders often reflected their involvement with the movement: from meetings in boardrooms to high street marches; from attending fashion-related events to monitoring web-based tools.

¹¹ A link to my research student profile at the University of Edinburgh was listed on the consent form provided to all formal research participants.

Understanding knowledge as constructed through social interactions (Bryman, 2008), my own position within the movement played a significant role in determining this approach. My work with Social Alterations aided me not only in a practical sense, helping to lock-down interviews and introductions for potential interviews, but also in terms of gaining necessary trust from potential participants. Contact details alone are not enough to secure interview access, and the right introduction from the right stakeholder was sometimes all that was needed to justify why someone should take time out of their already busy schedule to meet with me. In the global culture industry, objects do not move in a linear fashion (Lash and Lury, 2007).

Understanding the global fashion and apparel industry as operating within this space, a multi-mediated approach to research was required (McRobbie, 2016). While carrying out this research, my own position within the movement—whether as a graduate student at the University of Edinburgh or as a labour rights activist with Social Alterations—was not the only story I told. Navigating my way through fieldwork, I became conscious of the stories my clothing would signal and wondered about those embedded within the clothing worn by research participants.

As the project developed, the challenge of positioning stakeholders within the RFA movement began to emerge; through online data collection, interviews, and participant observation, it became more and more clear that increasingly diverse stakeholders are captured under the RFA movement umbrella. Stakeholder categories represent ideal types (Swedberg, 2018), useful for analysis within the scope of this case study and particularly important for the overall aims of the project: not only does the thesis set out to understand the movements of elite transnational stakeholders engaged in the RFA movement, and to determine whether anything has changed in the landscape since the Rana Plaza collapse, but also to make sense of whether fashion-related efforts are distinct from conventional strategies employed by TLR organisations, governments and companies—the likes of which have been critiqued for reinforcing simple stories related to workers and consumers alike, and for favouring Western interests. But also, for failing to consider structural inequalities related to the global fashion and apparel industry under the logic of capitalism. Findings gathered from data collected and analysed are presented in the

following four chapters: while the first two unpack and examine the online efforts of Fashion Revolution, the subsequent chapters examine the offline efforts of elite stakeholders engaged in the RFA movement landscape.

Chapter 5 The Fashion Revolution project: From UK-based DIY activism to a global movement



Image 5.1



Image 5.2

'Birds in a cage who long for a tree

Birds in a cage who're sewing for me

Open the door, let them fly free

Fly, free like shopping bags [...]'¹²



Image 5.3



Image 5.4

Images 5.1-5.4: Stills from the 'Shopping Bags' short, featuring animated 'Machinist puppet' made by textile artist Susie Vickery. Source: The Worthy Skirmishes (2014)

¹² See Appendix H for the full lyrics to 'Shopping Bags' by Worthy Skirmishes.

These are the lyrics to ‘Shopping Bags’, a song written by Australian musicians Katie Tucker and Sarah Taylor of The Worthy Skirmishes to commemorate the women workers who died in the 2013 Rana Plaza building collapse in Bangladesh (Tually, 2014). Recounting a story of trapped workers, caught in an industry designed to produce fashionable clothing for Western markets, the artists claim that Western consumer demand, in part, caused the disaster; the Western consumer desire to buy fashionable clothing at low-cost prices, they argue, is a driving force behind a system they believe captures and exploits ‘long to be free’ women (or ‘bird’) workers. They suggest consumers have the power to change the system (‘open the door’ to the ‘cage’) and better the lives of these women workers (‘let them fly free’). Through this lyric, Tucker and Taylor demonstrate a particular understanding of the global fashion and apparel industry, and of Bangladeshi garment work and workers; the song links the working conditions of Bangladeshi garment workers to the shopping habits of Western consumers, drawing attention to perceived slave-like conditions that depict female garment workers as trapped within a system they cannot escape—at least, not without assistance from Western consumers (Tually, 2014).

The song was produced alongside a music video developed in collaboration with Australian textile artist Susie Vickery. Like the song, the music video connects the high street to the factory floor, juxtaposing animated embroidered puppet representations of Bangladeshi workers against those of Western consumers (Image 5.3) (Vickery, no date). It has been viewed on YouTube over 2,000 times (The Worthy Skirmishes, 2014). More than a song, ‘Shopping Bags’ is a form of direct action—a direct action that reproduces a familiar story: weak workers in need of saving from free and powerful Western consumers. Scholars have critiqued this familiar ‘single-story’ trope for drawing connections between workers and consumers that are far too simplistic (Brooks, 2007; Kabeer, 2000; Seidman, 2007). For Tucker and Taylor, however, these are not simple connections. ‘Shopping Bags’ was created to explore the linkages they saw between themselves and the victims of the Rana Plaza building collapse; it was written as an expression of the guilt the artists felt in relation to the disaster and to inspire Western consumers to ‘reflect’ on

their place in systems of global fashion and apparel production (Tually, 2014). In the wake of the disaster, Tucker, Taylor and Vickery were not alone in linking labour rights violations to Western consumer habits; the artists' efforts were supported by the UK-based transnational organisation Fashion Revolution (FashRev), who featured the project in a blog post on their website (Tually, 2014).

Motivated by the Rana Plaza disaster, FashRev is the organisation behind Fashion Revolution Day, a global campaign inspired by the disaster to, among other aims, improve the working conditions of garment workers in countries like Bangladesh.¹³ Through its ongoing efforts, FashRev claims to represent the interests of a diverse range of RFA movement stakeholders—stakeholders, like Tucker and Taylor, who have grown tired of the social and environmental challenges at work in global fashion and apparel systems of production.

On the 24th of April 2013, 1133 people were killed and over 2500 were injured when the Rana Plaza factory complex collapsed in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Social and environmental catastrophes in our supply chains continue. Fashion Revolution Day says enough is enough.

Fashion Revolution (2014b)

FashRev communicates with the public through the website (www.fashionrevolution.org), a central online portal that pulls the organisation, its wider international network, and its global campaign together under one roof. The FashRev website acts as a window into a unique subsection of stakeholders engaged with the RFA community through work and activism: who are these stakeholders and who do they claim to represent? What do they want and how do they hope to achieve it?

In this chapter, I examine the FashRev website to gain insight into the FashRev organisation, its network, and its campaign. I present the FashRev website through an analysis of online data collected between 2014 and 2016. I begin by (1) introducing the *FashRev organisation*. In this section I describe FashRev's organisational

¹³ In 2016, FashRev announced it would be extending its annual campaign from Fashion Revolution Day (24 April) to Fashion Revolution Week (16-24 April).

structure, its funding model, and its two core teams: the Global Advisory Committee and the Global Coordination Team. In the second section, I move to (2) examine the wider *FashRev network* by describing FashRev Country Chapters. In the third section, (3) I describe the *FashRev campaign*. Here I highlight the claims FashRev seeks to advance and the repertoires of contention it suggests would be best advance them. In the final section I examine how the project has grown since it was first conceived and address methodological challenges of collecting website data for description and analysis. This chapter is descriptive; in the following chapter, Chapter 6, I present my analysis of the data presented here.

Before I begin, it is necessary to explain the terminology I use throughout this chapter in reference to the website content. As I explained in Chapter 4, I collected data from the FashRev website over two periods, beginning in November 2014. During the first period, I collected data from all publicly available FashRev webpages. This included static pages, downloadable documents, such as press releases, and campaign and blog posts (Appendix M). For the second pull of data, I was interested in understanding whether and how the organisation and network had changed over time. For this reason, I focused on static pages only. Specifically, those related to the organisation and network (Appendix M).

Data Collected	No. of documents	1 st data pull 2014/2015	2 nd data pull 2015/2016
Static pages	17	3, 5-6, 8-9 January 2015	25 June 2016
Documents	14	3, 6 January 2015	Not applicable
Blog posts	79	26, 28, 30 November 2014	Not applicable

Table 5.1: Fashion Revolution website data collection breakdown

Data collection impacted how I reference the FashRev organisation, its network, and the global campaign throughout the chapter and across the thesis in general. This is because when I began collecting data in November 2014, the inaugural 2014 Fashion

Revolution Day campaign had already come to an end. While the annual event for that year had closed, FashRev campaigning remained open as an ongoing process. During the initial period of data collection, for example, FashRev was already gearing up for its 2015 campaign and producing documents for the year ahead. Therefore, when I refer to the FashRev campaign, I am referring to the 2015 FashRev campaign, based on data collected during the initial pull, between November 2014 and January 2015. When I describe to the FashRev organisation and its wider network, I reference these in relation to two separate periods of data collection: the 2014/2015 organisation and network and the 2015/2016 organisation and network, respectively (see Appendix I and J).

5.1 Fashion Revolution: The organisation



Image 5.5: FashRev2015, 'Why do we need a Fashion Revolution?'

Source: Fashion Revolution (2015l)

5.1.1 Origin Story

FashRev launched in 2013 in direct response to the Rana Plaza building collapse. When Carry Somers first conceived of the idea, she was in the bath. As the story goes, she came up with FashRev on a whim:

I would love to take credit for [it] being a well-crafted idea, mulled over and honed until I was ready to share it with the world. But no, the idea to start a Fashion Revolution just popped into my head in the bathtub. A few minutes of consideration was all it took. I jumped out of my hot bath and started to write an email to the most obvious person I could think of, Orsola de Castro.

Somers (2014b)

The whim Somers claims FashRev was born from, however, stems from over 20 years of experience working in the global RFA industry; Somers is the founder of UK-based Pachacuti, a Fairtrade hat and accessory company sourcing products primarily from Ecuador since 1992 (Pachacuti, 2016). FashRev co-founder Orsola de Castro is also an experienced RFA movement stakeholder, having founded the ‘up-cycling’ UK-based clothing company From Somewhere in 1997 (Salter, 2010).¹⁴ She is also the founder of Esthethica, a tradeshow for responsible fashion products held annually at London Fashion Week in partnership with the British Fashion Council (BFC) (Fashion Revolution, 2016e). Before forming FashRev, Somers and de Castro had amassed a personal and professional network of elite RFA movement stakeholders, including media contacts. The initial idea was to organise an annual ‘Fashion Revolution Day’ that could mark the anniversary of the Rana Plaza collapse. The morning after emailing de Castro, Somers received a phone call from UK-based RFA movement author, producer and journalist Lucy Siegel (Siegel, 2011, 2014), and a plan was hatched:

Lucy Siegel called and was equally convinced that an annual Fashion Revolution Day was the right response to this tragedy. We felt that it was needed not just to commemorate all those who have died in the name of fashion, but to ensure that the many lives lost at Rana Plaza would be the impetus to bring about real change in the fashion industry. We sent our first email out to a wish-list of around 30 people who we thought would be the key figures to make this day happen. The response took us completely by surprise – everyone wanted to be involved!

Somers (2014b)

For its founders, Rana Plaza was the ‘metaphorical call to arms’ it needed to mobilise a unique community of RFA movement stakeholders (Somers, 2014a). What began

¹⁴ ‘Up-cycling’ is part of the taxonomy of ‘responsible’ fashion.

as an idea, thought up on a whim, has grown to stretch beyond the eyes and ears of a niche group of RFA movement stakeholders. In 2015, the FashRev project had a clear vision for what it wanted to achieve:

VISION	A fashion industry that values people, the environment, creativity and profit in equal measure
MISSION	Bringing everyone together to make that happen
WE ARE	A global movement, bringing together everyone in the fashion value chain for a positive campaign on 24 th April each year
2015 GOAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – People all over the world to question who made their clothes – The value chain to engage in a demonstrable commitment to transparency
OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Raise awareness of the true cost of fashion and its impact at every stage in the process of production and consumption – Show the world that change is possible through celebrating those involved in creating a more sustainable future – Bring people together the length of the value chain, from farmers to factory workers, brands to buyers, consumers to campaigners, to ask questions and to communicate with each other – Work towards long-term industry-wide change by using the Ethical Fashion Forum Value Chain Call to Action to get consensus around what change needs to happen
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Be curious – Find out – Do something

Image 5.6: Fashion Revolution Strategy 2015.

Source: Fashion Revolution (2015b)

The FashRev organisation views fashion as an influential instrument of change. According to de Castro, fast-fashion is not ‘fashion’ because it is not produced in a responsible way (Croese, 2015). For ‘fashion’ to be ‘fashion’, she argues, it must intrinsically connect to its modes of production and each mode of production must be tied to a set of social and environmental standards:

The [fashion] industry completely lost touch with its main values ever since it’s only been about rapid growth, mass production, [fast-fashion], and disposable luxury. It so detached from its origin that it then had to go and create a shit name so that people could be stigmatised. The reality is that sustainable fashion really is fashion. It’s everything else that isn’t sustainable that should be called as such. Choose whichever name you like the least, such as ‘unethical fashion’ or ‘unsustainable fashion’ to describe the way that the industry operates.

de Castro quoted in Croese (2015)

de Castro views systems of ‘rapid growth’ as violating the terms of fashion and ‘sustainable fashion’ as an industry label that creates a stigmatisation amongst fashion consumers. Yet the FashRev organisation—through its website, network and campaign—is spearheading a global movement against fast-fashion. In the next section, I describe the FashRev organisation, beginning with its funding model.

5.1.2 Funding model

When FashRev first started out, individuals formally connected to the organisation, through either central (Global Coordination Team and Global Advisory Committee) or satellite teams (individual Country Chapters) worked as volunteers. In 2014 and 2015, the FashRev campaign had a ‘support us’ static page, with an e-store (online store), where individuals could support the campaign by purchasing campaign products, such as FashRev branded t-shirts (Fashion Revolution, 2015j) (Image 5.7):



Image 5.7: FashRev2015 campaign t-shirts.

Source: Fashion Revolution (2015j)

At that time, the ‘support us’ webpage also linked to an external funding campaign website where supporters could donate funds in exchange for various products and packages, ranging from a single t-shirt to a trip to visit garment producers in India, depending on the level of donation. This fundraiser (now closed) had a goal of raising £75,000.00 (2% of this total was raised) (Indiegogo Inc., 2014). In 2015, the FashRev website had a ‘contact’ page informing site visitors that the project was underfunded and understaffed, managed only on a part-time basis (Fashion

Revolution, 2015c). While it was not clear where or how FashRev secured its funds for organisation and campaign operational costs at that time, there was a ‘donate’ page on the website. In 2016, FashRev began a GoFundMe fundraiser with a goal of raising £20,000.00 (Somers, 2016b). The GoFundMe campaign website provides a space for donors to leave a message. At the time of writing, this fundraiser had collected £878 (4% of its goal), by donors which included 8th-grade students:

From McCall School 8th graders in Philadelphia, PA, USA. We did a year-long service project to fight Human Rights Violations in Fashion! We made our own drawstring pouches and sold them at school to raise this money. Thank you for the work you do!

Donor comment: Leslie Greenberg (Somers, 2016b)

At the time of writing, FashRev was funded through various sources, including project funding from the C&A Foundation and a 3-year grant from the EU (Fashion Revolution, 2016a). This marks a significant change from its financially humble beginnings. FashRev is now engaged in various additional projects and initiatives, some of which are tied to the financial support it receives: the annual publication of the FashRev Transparency Index (Fashion Revolution, 2017c); a FashRev podcast series (Fashion Revolution, 2017e); multiple Fanzines (Fashion Revolution, 2017a); and a Garment Worker Diaries project (Fashion Revolution, 2017d), for example. These projects are collaborative efforts, carried out in partnership with other RFA movement stakeholders. Any funding FashRev receives is directed toward managing the organisation; at the time of writing, FashRev Country Chapters remained in operation through volunteer labour, and through any funds they (individual Country Chapters) may have secured on their own (Fashion Revolution, 2016a). Any separate funding secured by Country Chapters was required to follow guidelines stipulated in FashRev’s ‘Ethical Funding Policy’ (Fashion Revolution, 2017b).

5.1.3 Organisational structure: 2014/2015 – 2015/2016

When it first launched, the FashRev website claimed the organisation was just getting started; the campaigns it would organise and coordinate on the anniversary of the Rana Plaza collapse would continue each year, and that the success of these campaigns would be tied to the expertise of its core team:

Fashion Revolution is composed of key figures from the fashion industry and beyond: industry leaders; press; campaigners; consultants; representatives from charities and campaign organisations; academics and more. With a wide range of expertise, the Fashion Revolution Advisory Committee will work to ensure that this day becomes a significant, annual global event.

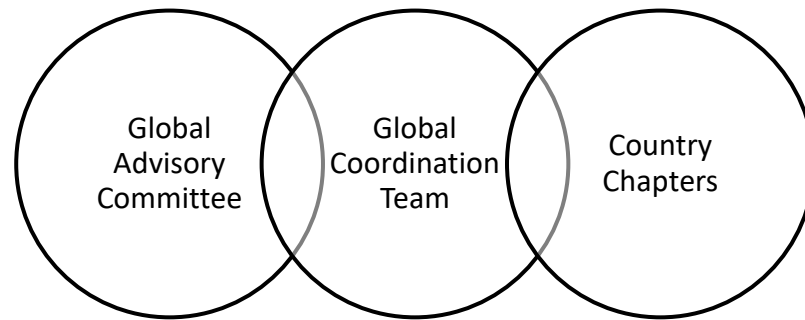
Fashion Revolution (2014e)

Now a registered Community Interest Company (CIC),¹⁵ FashRev has managed its global campaign annually since April 2014. RFA stakeholders formally connected to the FashRev project come from a diverse, yet concentrated industry space: fashion business owners, fashion designers and stylists, public relations and communications, brand, lifestyle and product marketing, education and research. Many of the global team members are linked to the UK through education and/or work experience, and/or through connections with UK-based NGO's and charities.

Based in the UK, FashRev is made up of three central teams of RFA movement stakeholders: (1) the Global Coordination Team, (2) the Global Advisory Committee and (3) satellite teams of FashRev Country Chapters. Each Country Chapter is managed by a designated Country Coordinator, who is linked to a Regional Coordinator (Fashion Revolution, 2016e). Regional Coordinators are then supported by the Global Coordination Team, which is further supported by the Global Advisory Committee (Fashion Revolution, 2016e). Each team works with one another in collaboration at national, regional, and global levels. The Global Advisory Committee is also the UK Country Chapter.

¹⁵ In the United Kingdom, a CIC is a limited company that is designed to prioritise community ahead of profit (Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies, 2015).

FashRev Organisational Structure: Internal Communication Flow



Graphic 5.1: Graphic by author showing internal FashRev communication flow.

Source: Fashion Revolution (2016e)

In examining data retrieved from the FashRev website between 2014 and 2015, it is clear that the structure of FashRev's two core teams (the Global Coordination Team and the Global Advisory Committee) has changed over time (Appendix I and J): while the Global Advisory Committee decreased from 32 members in 2014/2015 to 17 members in 2015/2016, the Global Coordination Team grew from 7 members in 2014/2015 members to 13 members in 2015/2016.

Stakeholders bring work experience and personal and professional networks to the organisation (Appendix I and J). The biographies of core FashRev team members feature on the FashRev website, and these work to legitimise the organisation; they showcase where and how FashRev is connected within both the global RFA movement as well as within the wider mainstream fashion and apparel industry (Appendix I and J) (Fashion Revolution, 2016e). Team biographies demonstrate industry credibility by, for example, highlighting employment history within various aspects of fashion and apparel industries, as well as education credentials. These justify that the team holds the authority to advise the public, and each other, on issues related to RFA. The credentials and experience of FashRev stakeholders connected to satellite Country Chapter were also flexed on the FashRev website (Fashion Revolution, 2016e).

5.2 Fashion Revolution: The wider network

The wider FashRev network is made up of satellite Country Chapters; at the time of writing, the FashRev organisation operated in over 90 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, and North and South America, as well as in Australia and New Zealand (Fashion Revolution, 2016c). Website readers were invited to discover whether or not the campaign was taking place in their country by scrolling down to the bottom of the main site (the home page) (Image 5.8).

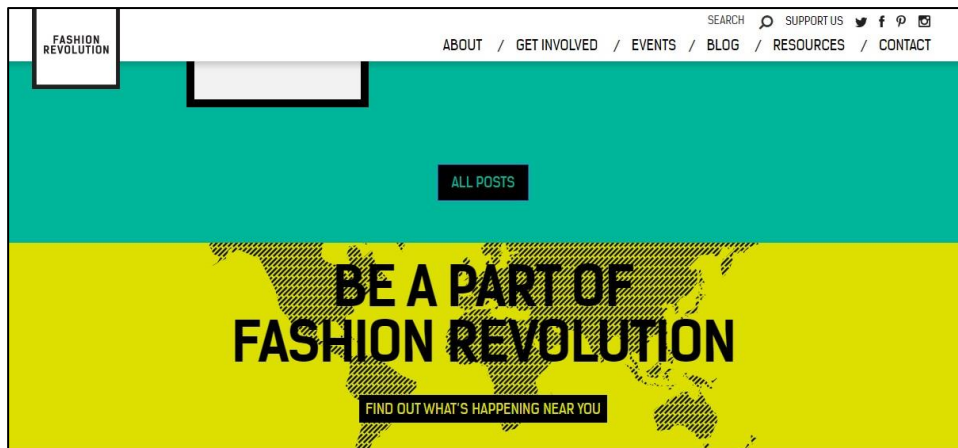


Image 5.8: Partial screenshot of the 2014/2015 FashRev homepage, retrieved 5 January 2015. Source: Fashion Revolution (2015f)

By clicking to 'Find out what's happening near you', visitors were directed to a page listing all countries formally engaged with the organisation. This information was also available by selecting the 'Get Involved' menu option at the top of the website (Image 5.8).

5.2.1 Fashion Revolution Country Chapters: 2014/2015 – 2015/2016

Country Chapters were organised by geographical location and marked with a country flag. Selecting a country's flag revealed information related to that Country Chapter (Image 5.9).



Image 5.9: Partial screenshot of FashRev Country Profile page, 2015/2016 website, retrieved 25 June 2016. Source: Fashion Revolution (2016c)

FashRev Organisational Structure:		
FashRev Country Chapters ¹⁶		
Country Chapters: Geographic Region	2014/2015	2015/2016
Africa	7	13
Asia	11	20
Australia & New Zealand	3	3
Central America	2	7
Europe	19	32
North America	3	3
South America	7	10
Total number of FashRev Country Chapters	52	88

Table 5.2: Breakdown of FashRev Country Chapters by Geographic Region

Changes to FashRev Country Chapters between 2014 and 2016 were significant. Not only was there substantial growth in-country representation overall, moving from 52

¹⁶ 2014/2015 data retrieved 5 January 2015; 2015/2016 data retrieved 25 June 2016. At the time of writing, there were over 90 Country Chapters.

countries in 2014/2015 to 88 countries in 2015/2016 (Table 5.2), there was also visible growth in the number of individuals and organisations representing FashRev in each geographic region (Table 5.3).

FashRev Organisational Structure:	
FashRev Country Chapters	
2014/2015 – 2015/2016 ¹⁷	
2014/2015	2015/2016
Africa	
South Africa (9), Swaziland (1), Tanzania (n/a), Ethiopia (n/a), Kenya (9), Burkina Faso (1), Tunisia (n/a)	South Africa (14), Swaziland (1), Tanzania (n/a), Ethiopia (n/a), Kenya (9), Tunisia (1) Zimbabwe (1), Nigeria (1), Morocco (1), Ghana (1), Egypt (1), Democratic Republic of the Congo (n/a), Liberia (1)
Asia	
Bangladesh (8), India (3), Israel (n/a), Japan (5), Nepal (4), Singapore (5), Sri Lanka (1), Taiwan (1), Thailand (3), United Arab Emirates (1), Indonesia (5)	Bangladesh (4), India (3), Israel (1), Japan (5), Nepal (2), Singapore (3), Sri Lanka (1), Taiwan (1), Thailand (4), United Arab Emirates (4), People's Republic of China (2), Indonesia (7), South Korea (3), Vietnam (6), Malaysia (2), Turkey (4), Pakistan (2), Philippines (2), Cambodia (1), Kuwait (1)
Australia & New Zealand	
Australia & New Zealand (11), Vanuatu (1)	Australia (n/a, contact page), Vanuatu (1), New Zealand (n/a, contact page)
Central America	
Guatemala (1), Panama (1)	Guatemala (4), Panama (1), Costa Rica (6), El Salvador (n/a),

¹⁷ 2014/2015 data retrieved 5 January 2015; 2015/2016 data retrieved 25 June 2016.

	Nicaragua (1), Trinidad & Tobago (1), Haiti (1)
Europe	
France (4), Germany (11), Greece (6), Italy (1), Netherlands (4), Poland (3), Spain (6), Sweden (1), UK (7), Bulgaria (9), Switzerland (3), Finland (2), Slovenia (1), Belgium (6), Estonia (4), Austria (5), Czech Republic (1), Norway (n/a), Portugal (1)	France (8), Germany (14), Greece (12), Italy (4), Netherlands (4), Poland (7), Spain (12), Sweden (1), UK (39), Bulgaria (9), Switzerland (6), Finland (8), Slovenia (1), Belgium (6), Estonia (4), Austria (4), Czech Republic (3), Norway (n/a), Portugal (9), Ireland (2), Lithuania (3), Denmark (1), Luxembourg (0), Azerbaijan (1), Croatia (4), Macedonia (3), Slovakia (2), Romania (1), Bosnia and Herzegovina (n/a), Cyprus (1), Serbia (1), Ukraine (1)
North America	
Canada (1), Mexico (2), USA (19)	Canada (2), Mexico (5), USA (26)
South America	
Brazil (5), Chile (3), Peru (1), Argentina (1), Uruguay (2), Columbia (4), Paraguay (1)	Brazil (7), Chile (2), Peru (1), Argentina (3), Uruguay (2), Columbia (5), Paraguay (1), Ecuador (2) Venezuela (1), Bolivia (n/a)

Table 5.3: Changes and growth of the Country Chapters and teams between 2014/2015 and 2015/2016. Numbers in parenthesis note the number of team members listed on the website at the time of data collection.

The FashRev website provided space for participating Country Chapters to showcase individuals connected to their respective chapter in a similar fashion to how the website presented stakeholders on the FashRev Global Advisor Team and the Global Advisory Committee: team member photos—a professional headshot, for example—as well as biographical information, outlining relevant work and industry experience, with links to personal and/or professional websites. The information available to the viewer on Country Chapter pages could include the name and biographical

information of the country coordinator, or country lead, as well as any other country team members.

Each Country Chapter was distinct, and information provided within each varied. Not all Country Chapter webpages provided details on country contacts, for example: the 2014/2015 Country Chapter pages for Tanzania, Ethiopia, Tunisia, Israel and Norway did not contain any details on the Country Chapter (listed as ‘n/a’ in Table 5.3). The webpages for these countries stated ‘more information coming soon’ (Tanzania and Ethiopia), a simple ‘welcome’ message (Tunisia, Israel), or, in the case of Norway, provided general information on the Country Chapter’s involvement with the FashRev project (Fashion Revolution, 2014i). By 2015/2016, some of these Country Chapters had updated their pages, providing additional information (Tunisia and Israel), but not all (Tanzania, Ethiopia and Norway) (Fashion Revolution, 2016c). Likewise, of the 37 new countries that joined the campaign in 2015/2016 (Table 5.2), not all added Country Chapter pages contained stakeholder details (the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bolivia) (Fashion Revolution, 2016c). In the case of Australia and New Zealand, stakeholder information was removed: in 2014/2015, the countries held a single page together under ‘Australia and New Zealand’ and listed 11 stakeholders working under a single chapter; in 2015/2016, Australia and New Zealand held separate pages, each replacing stakeholder details with an embedded ‘subscribe to our mailing list’ request form, and an invitation to contact organisers through social media and/or email for further details.

Country Chapters were also given space to promote events and activities they worked to coordinate on behalf of FashRev. Here, country teams showcased their take on the fashion revolution underway. Below, I draw on the 2014/2015 Country Chapters of Kenya, Bangladesh, and Germany to demonstrate how each country in the FashRev network—under the umbrella of the FashRev organisation—held unique, local agendas.

5.2.1.1 Example 1: Fashion Revolution Kenya

We would like to introduce you to our textile industry through the journeys our garments make before we wear them. From cotton farming through to finished garment, our industry has declined dramatically to 15 textile mills actively functioning today. We would like to challenge Kenyan youth to think of their future and what is important to them. Do they want to rebuild our industry, or should we just be fashion consumers? Do we care about where our clothing comes from, or do we just want to look like the global musicians on our screens, is how our look is made important? We will do this through a series of spoken word performances by college students and celebrated poets. They will tell their garment's story and stimulate a youth debate about local versus global sourcing. Whether you are Kenyan, resident in Kenya or sourcing here, we would like you to understand our industry better, our manufacturers & producers, our fashion entrepreneurs and all the people, who make our clothes. We are passionate about using the textile industry to make a positive impact on the growth in our country.

Fashion Revolution (2015k)

The satellite chapter from Kenya sought to question the country's position in local and global fashion and apparel markets, with respect to both production and consumption. The organisers wanted to challenge youth to consider the future of Kenya and extended an invitation for all stakeholders connected to the country and its textile sector to engage with FashRev Kenya. To spark conversation and debate, the team turned to alternative forms of expression, in the form of poetry and spoken word. The chapter description began by setting the scene of an industry in decline and closed with a statement that clearly indicated that the team at FashRev Kenya believed that growth in the country's local sector would benefit Kenya. The 2014/2015 satellite chapter for Bangladesh had a different approach.

5.2.1.2 Example 2: Fashion Revolution Bangladesh

It is the responsibility of Fashion Revolution Day Bangladesh and conscientious citizens worldwide to remind the international community of the issues that caused the Rana Plaza collapse and other garment issues. These issues can be traced to the very fabric of the industry all the way to the small choices consumers make at their local retailer. By focusing on 'Who Made Your Clothes' the community of Fashion Revolution Day Bangladesh hopes to help the international community focus on the issues relating to the Rana Plaza collapse and other disasters. Fashion Revolution Day Bangladesh is committed to showcasing the strength, resilience and commitment of the Bangladesh community. By showcasing local projects that have successfully documented their supply chain to include the faces and materials used along

the way we are able to inspire other projects that will follow the same [vein]. These projects will, through their transparency, bypass the workplace issues that initiated these disasters that are becoming [commonplace] in the industry.

Fashion Revolution (2014c)

In Bangladesh, the FashRev country team focused on transparency and linked a root cause of Rana Plaza to consumer choice. The chapter emphasised the importance of supporting Bangladeshi production that could provide consumers with information relating to its supply chain. The chapter saw itself as capable of educating the international community on the realities of apparel production in Bangladesh. Transparency, it argued, would ‘bypass’ labour rights challenges in the country. Although Rana Plaza was stressed as a significant event, the Country Chapter sought to highlight other manufacturing practices to demonstrate that not all fashion and apparel produced in Bangladesh was manufactured in unsafe buildings.

5.2.1.3 Example 3: Fashion Revolution Germany

WILLKOMMEN ZUM FASHION REVOLUTION DAY GERMANY

Die deutsche Initiative startete offiziell im Januar 2014 in Berlin.

Designer, Photographen, Shop Inhaber, Bildungszentren und verschiedene soziale Organisationen beteiligen sich mit Präsentationen und interaktiven Aktionen an dem Projekt. Vor und am 24. April 2014 werden Workshops und Events geplant, die auf die Frage aufmerksam machen „Who made your clothes?“

Wenn Sie in Deutschland wohnen und Sie interessiert sind am Fashion Day, schauen Sie sich unsere Facebook Seite an und kontaktieren Sie uns.

Wir sind stolz darauf ein Teil der Bewegung zu sein und freuen uns über Ihre Beteiligung!

facebook.com/pages/Fashion-Revolution-Day-Germany/358022761002655

[fash_revde](#)

English Translation:

WELCOME TO THE FASHION REVOLUTION DAY GERMANY

The German initiative officially started in January 2014 in Berlin.

Designers, photographers, shop owners, education centres and various social organisations participate in the project with presentations and interactive actions. Before and on April 24, 2014, workshops and events are planned, which draw attention to the question "Who made your clothes?"

If you live in Germany and you are interested in Fashion Day, have a look at our Facebook page and contact us.

We are proud to be part of the movement and look forward to your participation!

facebook.com/pages/Fashion-Revolution-Day-Germany/358022761002655

[fash_revde](#)

Fashion Revolution (2014h)

The FashRev Germany Country Chapter webpage invited participants to engage with the FashRev campaign through social media, embedded links to the Country Chapter's Facebook page and Twitter handle and provided biographical information of stakeholders formally engaged with the chapter. Although the Country Chapter page informed supporters that it would be organising various events leading up to and on Fashion Revolution Day, it did not signal which aspects of the FashRev 'movement' the Country Chapter would be focusing on.

Both Kenya and Bangladesh focused on the national (local production) and the international (global trade and consumption): both sought to raise awareness for consumers by providing information; both believed in supporting local fashion and apparel production, promoting 'Made in Kenya' and 'Made in Bangladesh'; and both teams were dedicated to RFA production. While the Kenya team was 'passionate', the Bangladesh team felt a sense of 'responsibility'. The Germany team, however, took another approach. Unlike the Kenya and Bangladesh Country Chapters, Germany was vague: it did not feature any content on the Country Chapter page and instead directed supporters to find details regarding FashRev events in Germany through the FashRev Germany Country Chapter social media accounts. Kenya, Bangladesh and Germany are examples of Country Chapters that listed their stakeholders and described their aims and activities.

5.2.2 Fashion Revolution network extended using web-based tools

The FashRev Germany Country Chapter was not alone in directing supporters away from the FashRev website. When a Country Chapters lacked information relating to how supporters might engage with the FashRev project, additional information could be found using web-based tools. In addition to the case of Germany, another example can be seen through the Canadian FashRev Country Chapter. The 2014/2015 FashRev website listed Kelly Drennan, Founder of Toronto-based Fashion Takes Action (FTA), as the formal lead for organising and coordinating events in Canada (Fashion Revolution, 2014i). Meanwhile, Myriam Laroche, Founder of Vancouver-based Eco Fashion Week (EFW), heavily supported the FashRev organisation through FashRev branded events in Vancouver, Canada. Although the FashRev Country Chapter webpage for Canada did not list Laroche as a formal stakeholder in Canada, this information was available through a FashRev dedicated webpage on Drennan's FTA website (Fashion Takes Action, 2015). The FashRev organisation encouraged individuals and organisations to engage with the FashRev project using web-based tools: 'If you are running an event, please get in contact with your local Country Co-ordinator to get the event added to the calendar' (Fashion Revolution, 2014i). Information on events organised by Laroche could also be found by following 'FashRev Canada' on social media, where additional content related to activities in Canada were shared and promoted (Fashion Revolution Canada, 2016a, 2016b). Each country within the FashRev network could manage their own social media accounts, using FashRev branding to engage a wider public with the FashRev campaign. In the following section, I describe the FashRev campaign – a movement of stakeholders informally connected to the FashRev organisation and network.

5.3 Fashion Revolution: The 2015 campaign

In this section of the chapter, I examine the 2015 FashRev 'Fashion Revolution Day' campaign, a campaign that culminated on the second anniversary of the Rana Plaza collapse. I describe its aims and objectives and outline the strategies and efforts it suggested would achieve them. The FashRev website acts as an umbrella location, or hub, where all public-facing FashRev content is stored (Appendix K). Further to holding information related to the FashRev organisation and the FashRev network, it

maintains content relating to the FashRev campaign, providing campaign-related resources for dissemination, such as downloadable and printable posters, as well as press releases, contact information, and educational materials, designed in concert with FashRev campaign aspirations. The website also hosts the FashRev blog, where official members of the organisational and network, as well as stakeholders from across the wider RFA movement, share stories, projects, research, events, and opinions related to RFA production and consumption. Powered by experience, networks and volunteer labour, the 2015 FashRev campaign combined new forms of online tactics with conventional offline strategies.

5.3.1 Fashion Revolution campaign: Harnessing web-based tools for online activism

Before there was a FashRev website there was a FashRev Facebook page. From the beginning, organisers made explicit the community of stakeholders they hoped to mobilise and support through their campaign:

Fashion Revolution Day will celebrate fashion as a positive influence. It will offer a voice to everyone in our fashion ecosystem who is bringing change. It will rally the high street, the high end, the new, the ancient, the innovators, the buyers, the shoppers, the media, the commentators, the activists and everyone in between.

We want the day to gain its own momentum, with individuals and organisations running with the concept of Fashion Revolution Day, both in the UK and around the world.

Fashion Revolution, Facebook post on 11 August 2013 (Fashion Revolution, 2013)

The internet is understood as a powerful tool that expands social networks by amplifying knowledge sharing capacities, enabling new forms of transnational solidarity and connecting individuals and groups through informal and formal ties (Carty, 2001). As a CIC, FashRev defines the ‘community’ it represents as ‘[e]veryone involved in the fashion supply chain, including but not limited to farmers, producers, buyers, designers, retailers and consumers’ (Fashion Revolution, 2016e). The 2015 FashRev campaign called on this community to harness social media tools.

In 2015 a primary aim of the FashRev campaign was to increase transparency in the global fashion and apparel industry. Campaign organisers encouraged FashRev supporters to contact companies producing fashion and apparel products and ask them for details behind how their products were made. Fashion Revolution Day took place on the 24 April to mark the anniversary of the Rana Plaza collapse, and campaign organisers asked supporters to specifically engage with brands on this date. The campaign created FashRev brand guidelines (Image 5.12), provided campaign-related images (Image 5.10), and suggested campaign-specific language and hashtags be used in communication with brands (Image 5.13).

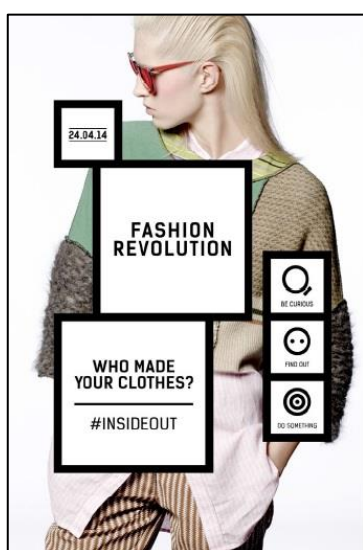


Image 5.10



Image 5.11

Ask the brand...

I'm [name],
and I want to thank the people who made my [clothes].
Hi @[brand], #whomademyclothes?

Signed, [email]
[country]

ASK THE BRAND

Image 5.13



Image 5.12

Image 5.10: Screenshot, 2015 FashRev website (Fashion Revolution, 2015f);

Image 5.11: FashRev action invitation to take a 'selfie' (Screenshot);

Image 5.12: 2015 Brand Guidelines (Fashion Revolution, 2015b);

Image 5.13: Autofill form to contact brands via Twitter (Screenshot)

Online tactics involved engaging in a form of web-based ‘multilateral interactivity’ using social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram (della Porta and Mosca, 2009: 778). These were encouraged to take place on social media platforms, such as Twitter and Instagram using campaign hashtags (#InsideOut, #WhoMadeYourClothes).¹⁸ The campaign also invited brands and producers to participate in the campaign by asking them to take a photo holding a downloadable campaign branded poster stating ‘I made your clothes’ (#IMadeYourClothes) and uploading the picture to social media (Image 6.12). Using social media tools, the FashRev campaign enabled its wider community network to engage with the FashRev project. The FashRev organisation reported that both the 2014 and 2015 campaigns (each taking place on 24 April) saw the campaign ‘trending’ on Twitter at #1 globally. FashRev reported that throughout April 2015, 64 million people on Twitter and Instagram used the hashtag #WhoMadeMyClothes (Fashion Revolution, 2015i: 24). Moreover, the campaign hashtags #WhoMadeMyClothes and #IMadeYourClothes have adopted by the wider RFA movement.

5.3.2 Fashion Revolution campaign: Harnessing the FashRev network for offline activism

While the FashRev campaign supported online tactics, it also called for offline engagement. Offline, FashRev Country Chapters organised events on behalf of FashRev, with all activities carried out in line with FashRev brand guidelines. Offline strategies included such events as commemorative marches and walks, vigils, pop-up photo booths, film and documentary screenings, video productions, fashion shows, workshops, art exhibits, poetry readings, dance productions, panel discussions, presentations and lectures, and even product lines (such as t-shirts, scarves, etc.). FashRev both engaged in marches organised by TLR organisations and organised their own FashRev specific marches. Table 5.4 shows two examples from 2015: FashRev engaging in conventional efforts organised by War on Want and Labour Behind the Label (LBL) in the UK (left) and FashRev demonstrating in Peru with a protest banner (right):

¹⁸ The #InsideOut hashtag was used in 2014, for the inaugural 2014 FashRev campaign.

Examples of Fashion Revolution team efforts on the anniversary of the collapse	
	
<p>“Sarah Ditty @sarahditty part of the Fashion Revolution Day Coordination Team, talking about #FashRev at the ‘Remembering Rana Plaza’ #LongRd2Justice walk on Oxford St, London. #waronwant”</p> <p>(Source: FashRev Instagram, 22/04/2015)</p>	<p>“¿Quien hizo mi ropa? Big #whomademyclothes banner for #FashRev in Peru #Repost @juanitabakana”</p> <p>(Spanish translation: “Who made my clothes?” Source: FashRev Instagram, 20/04/2015)</p>

Table 5.4: FashRev demonstrations in the United Kingdom and in Peru.

5.3.2.1 Example 1: Fashion Revolution Bangladesh

Just as FashRev Country Chapter teams have changed over time, so have FashRev blog posts. In Bangladesh, for example, the 2014/2015 team was led by Luke Swanson, Co-Founder of The Tripty Project, a responsible fashion and apparel company sourcing materials and manufacturing products in Bangladesh (Fashion Revolution, 2014c, 2016c). In 2014, Swanson was interviewed for a project featured

on the FashRev blog. I transcribed the text of the video interview during data collection (below). Although the video is no longer available in a FashRev blog post, I was able to document the post (Appendix L).

We're trying to promote these people (garment workers) as artisans, rather than people in need of help. Because, to promote change rather than dependency, we're trying to create like a resilience and a pride in this, which is extremely important in this, because while you want the people in the First world to feel conscientious, and maybe like "sorry" isn't the right word, you want people here (in Bangladesh) not to feel like other people are feeling sorry for them. We want people here (in Bangladesh) to feel like they got it, and like other people just need to lend a hand, but they are at the forefront, they are the spear point, and they are taking it on themselves, and other people are simply backing them up.

Rather than taking the forefront from a digital frontier, like thousands of miles away. And I think that that is like an extremely, it might feel like a subtext, in the larger scheme of things, but that is an extremely, extremely important thing that we are trying to focus on here. And I am extremely conscious of that, as a white male from America, and which is why I am mostly, I would humbly like to say, I am just simply acting as an organiser.

In the interview, Swanson highlights his view that efforts to support Bangladeshi's should come from Bangladesh, 'rather than taking the forefront from a digital frontier'. In 2015/2016, the Bangladesh Country Chapter was led by Nawshin Khair, a member of the 2015/2016 Global Advisory Committee (Fashion Revolution, 2016e, 2016f). Khair is a fashion designer of Fairtrade products in Bangladesh, with experience working with media and communication within the country. It is perhaps ironic that Swanson was still formally engaged with the FashRev campaign in 2015/2016, working instead—perhaps ironically—on the US Country Chapter team as the Regional Coordinator for the West Coast (Fashion Revolution, 2016g).

5.3.2.2 Example 2: Fashion Revolution Germany

On the first anniversary of the collapse (24 April 2014), FashRev Germany produced a music video for the FashRev campaign (Fashion Revolution Germany, 2014). To mark the second anniversary of the Rana Plaza building collapse, FashRev Germany

produced a video for circulation on YouTube titled ‘The 2 Euro T-shirt’ (Fashion Revolution, 2015a). The video features a t-shirt vending-machine, branded with the FashRev campaign logo, strategically placed in a busy public location, enticing curious onlookers to approach. Inside the machine, it appears, are small packages of white t-shirts, neatly wrapped in clear plastic, and these too were labelled ‘FashRev.’

‘People want fashion for a bargain’, the video states. ‘But would they still buy it if they knew how it was made?’

When users approach the device, they are asked if they would like to purchase a t-shirt for 2 Euro. After dropping change in the coin slot, and selecting a size, the shoppers are shown a short video featuring a collection of images of workers toiling under seemingly devastating working conditions:

*Meet Manisha
One of millions making our cheap clothing
For as little as 13 cents
Each day for 16 hours
Do you still want to buy this 2€ t-shirt?*

Participants were then asked if they wanted to ‘buy’ the t-shirt or ‘donate’ the 2€ already loaded into the machine. Viewers then watch as people opt not to buy the t-shirt, and the vending machine thank them. The video closes with a final statement: ‘People care when they know. Help us to remind the world. Share this to start the fashion revolution.’ The video is not shared through the FashRev blog. Uploaded to the FashRev YouTube account, it has been circulated across various other spaces online. At the time of writing, the video has been viewed more than 7 million times on YouTube.

The Fashion Revolution campaign: ‘Do something’



Image 5.14: 2015 FashRev campaign slogan (Fashion Revolution, 2015b)

The 2015 FashRev campaign promoted campaign strategies both online and offline. One mantra repeated over and over again on the FashRev website was: ‘Be curious. Find out. Do something.’ The 2015 FashRev campaign used these three steps to mobilise fashion and apparel consumers to engage with the project, publishing a how-to guidebook. The ‘How to be a Fashion Revolutionary’ FashRev campaign guidebook, or roadmap, outlines each step in detail and is available to download from the FashRev website (Fashion Revolution, 2015d).¹⁹ The roadmap is a 40-page booklet, outlining three steps that FashRev believes consumers can take to improve social and environmental issues in the global fashion and apparel industry. The first step involves using social media platforms to ask brands, retailers, and suppliers the central FashRev campaign slogan: ‘Who made my clothes?’ (Ditty et al., 2015: 20-25; Fashion Revolution, 2015f). According to FashRev campaign guidelines, consumers are directly connected to the lives of garment workers through their consumption practices: ‘[y]ou re-shape the fashion industry – the lives of its producers, its workers – every time you buy or dispose of clothing [...] It just takes three simple steps’ (Ditty et al., 2015: 18).

¹⁹ A printed copy could also be found at FashRev events: I secured my free copy of the roadmap at an event co-sponsored by the FashRev Scotland chapter in Dundee.

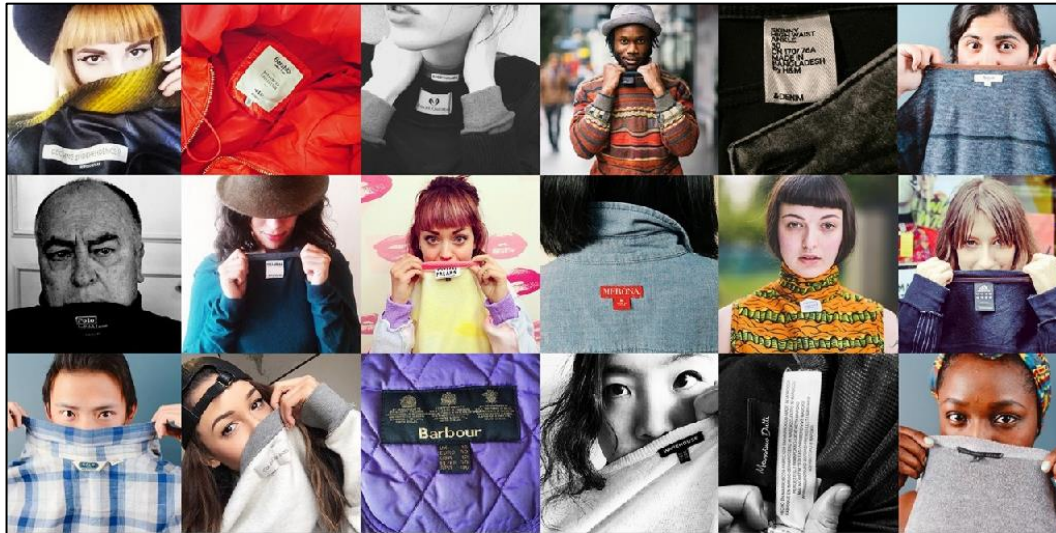


Image 5.15: Examples of 'selfies' from consumers.

Source: Screenshots from the website homepage of Fashion Revolution (2015f)

At the time of data collection, the 2015 FashRev website homepage aided in this process by providing an autofill form so that consumers could ask brands this question directly through the FashRev website. The next step, 'find out', required research. Here, consumers were encouraged to 'become a fashion detective' and learn about social and environmental issues in the industry by conducting online research and exploring suggested resources listed in both the campaign guidebook and on the FashRev website (Ditty et al., 2015: 27; Fashion Revolution, 2015g). In the third and final step, 'do something', the FashRev campaign guidebook and website invited consumers to alter their lifestyles and change their shopping habits. The FashRev guidebook provided suggested next steps to become 'a fashion revolutionary', offering 22 actions (Ditty et al., 2015: 30) (Table 5.5).

<i>FashRev suggested pro-fashion advice and actions: 'Do something'</i>				
FashRev action advice	#	FashRev actions	FashRev Description	Strategic pathway
'Buy better, buy less. Invest in success'	1	<i>Buy less</i>	Reduce the amount of clothing purchased each year	Consumer
	2	<i>Buy better</i>	'The Investment Buy' involves saving money to purchase items that are 'special'	Consumer

	3	<i>Champion new designers</i>	Find and support new designers	Consumer
	4	<i>Go artisanal</i>	Support artisanal crafts to ‘empower’ women	Consumer
‘Rent, wish, swap. Buy second-hand and vintage pieces’	5	<i>Go charity shopping</i>	Help prevent fast-fashion from going to the landfill	Consumer
	6	<i>Buy vintage</i>	Shop sustainably by ‘reusing, repurposing and extending the life of beautiful clothes’	Consumer
	7	<i>You’re hired</i>	Rent clothing if it will only be worn once or if it is too expensive to purchase	Consumer
	8	<i>Swap ‘til you drop</i>	Share and exchange clothing with friends and attend clothing ‘swishing’ parties, where attendees can exchange clothing.	Consumer
‘Mend, make and customize’	9	<i>Tailor away</i>	Make alterations to clothing that you already own so that you will wear it again	Consumer
	10	<i>Fix up, look sharp</i>	Mend and repair clothing that could be fixed	Consumer
	11	<i>Have a go</i>	Make your own clothes	Consumer
‘Donate your clothes responsibly’	12	Reconsider donating clothing to charity shops to avoid second-hand clothing sent to other countries—consider local initiatives, such as clothing drives instead		Consumer
‘Express yourself’	13	<i>Be a craftivist</i>	Engage in ‘gentle protest’ through craftivism	Brand, government, etc.
‘Go Guerrilla Style’	14	Stage ‘gentle forms of protest’ such as a public stunt		Brand, government, etc.
	15	<i>Fash Mob</i>	Organise a public ‘flash mob’ performance to	Brand, government, etc.

			inspire people to consider workers	
‘Get others involved’	16	Become a FashRev Student Ambassador		Consumer
‘See it to believe it’	17	<i>Find the #Haulalternative</i>	Continue shopping for ‘hauls’ but try hauling from alternative sources: second-hand shops and swap events, etc.	Consumer
	18	<i>Host a screening</i>	Volunteer to host a screening of the film to generate discussion in your community	Consumer
‘Make your voice heard’	19	<i>Write to your policymakers</i>	Contact local politicians to ask questions; consider leading a demonstration or a rally	Local government
‘Make a statement’	20	Make a promise to yourself regarding the clothing you wear or set a challenge for yourself: for example, ‘[t]his year I’m not going to buy a single thing’		Consumer
‘Meet the makers’	21	Educate yourself on workers stories and lives		Consumer
‘Join other campaigns’	22	Learn about and support additional campaigns, in addition to the FashRev campaign		Brand, government, etc.

Table 5.5: Pro-fashion FashRev actions and pathways.

Source: Adapted from Ditty et al. (2015: 30-37)

The FashRev website echoed the pro-fashion suggestions outlined in the guidebook and offered an additional campaign action: a love letter (Fashion Revolution, 2015d). Love letters could be photos, videos or letters produced by consumers to tell the stories behind their favourite clothing (Fashion Revolution, 2016d). The FashRev website invited pro-fashion revolutionaries to share a public love letter during the FashRev annual campaign (Fashion Revolution, 2016d). The website further supported the 2015 campaign by providing educational resources.

5.3.3 Fashion Revolution campaign: Education

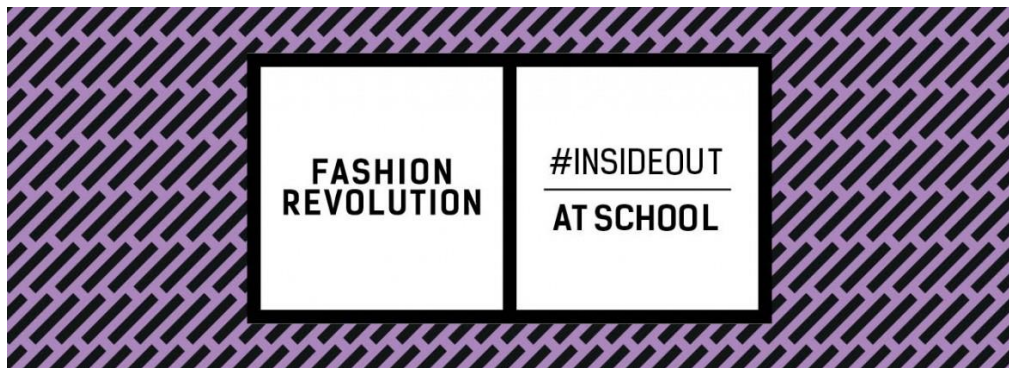


Image 5.16: FashRev Educational Resources (Fashion Revolution, 2016b)

The FashRev campaign used education as a tool to encourage supporters to ask questions, to uncover social and environmental challenges across supply chains, and to showcase positive stories—that is, practices of fashion production and consumption that counter the sweatshop metaphor: ‘We are here to tell a different story about the clothes we wear’ (Ditty et al., 2015: 6). The FashRev campaign uses fashion as a tool: education is the strategy; fashion is the hook. Encouraging its supporters to ask questions about the clothing they are wearing, de Castro notes that FashRev is

[...] asking people to engage in a process of discovery. Somehow, to follow a new journey, discovering who made their clothes, what are their clothes made out of, where does this material originate and the people that sew them? So a journey backwards, really, to the history of what they’re wearing.

de Castro, quoted in an interview with Flintoff (2014)

FashRev developed educational resources to help learners unravel the story of their clothing, an approach developed by FashRev Education Coordinator Dr Ian Cook, an academic working in Geography at the University of Exeter. In 2008 Cook founded the website ‘Follow the Thing’ (www.followthethings.com), an online research space publishing information related to the tracing and tracking of various objects (including fashion items) through their supply chains, an approach inspired by the work and research of Appadurai (1986) and Marcus (1995) (Follow the Things, 2016). Drawing on fashion, the campaign used education initiatives as a strategy to

entice consumers to ask new questions, disrupting essentialist ‘single-story’ understandings related to both workers and consumers.

5.4 Challenges of website analysis

The FashRev project, as presented in this chapter, is presented using data collected through public-facing FashRev webpages. It is clear that the FashRev organisation, network and campaign changed over time. Observations of changes that occurred between 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 from the Global Advisory Committee and the Global Coordination Team and Country Chapter pages demonstrate the structural limitations of website data collection in various ways. When I began data collection, FashRev was a volunteer-led project. As such, organisational challenges may have related to technical difficulties and time-management issues; the administration of tasks under limited resources may have impacted how and when the website was updated. The listing of satellite Country Chapter team members on the FashRev website did not accurately capture a country’s engagement with the project; stakeholders formally supporting FashRev in any given country were not always featured on the FashRev website. However, content management and communication for each country could be outsourced: stakeholders within a country could join the FashRev project without being featured on their country’s page, as seen in the example of Canada. While stakeholders connected to the project could support FashRev through other channels (such as Facebook and Twitter, etc.), there were architectural challenges to capturing and presenting all network and campaign engagement in a single webpage. Content management tools such as Twitter and Facebook facilitate public engagement and communication in real-time, alleviating some administrative pressure relating to updating Country Chapter pages. Moreover, text could be added, edited and/or removed, as was the case with Tunisia, Israel, Australia and Bangladesh. Yet changes to Country Chapters between 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 suggest that content provided on the FashRev website also changed with time, as a result of changes to organisational structure as well as funding. While these limitations, both organisational and material, impact when and how FashRev engages with its wider community, they also expose important methodological limitations of carrying out data collection through website analysis. For example, in

terms of understanding the offline footprint of an organisation through its website and related web-based tools.

5.5 Conclusion

From a do-it-yourself (DIY) project, FashRev has grown substantially since it first launched in 2013. The project has gained support from individuals and organisations across the RFA movement, from endorsements by RFA celebrity advocate Livia Firth (Fashion Revolution, 2014e), to press coverage from such high profile fashion media stakeholders as Vogue Magazine (Bumpus, 2014; Kilcooley-OHalloran and Milligan, 2014), and The Business of Fashion (BoF) (Blanchard, 2014), elite fashion spaces flagged by McRobbie (2016) in her research into the multi-mediated nature of fashion under the global culture industry. FashRev has also expanded to received support from governments, international organisations and global brands: it has held events at the UK's Houses of Parliament (both the House of Lords and the House of Commons), organised by FashRev in partnership with the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Ethics and Sustainability in Fashion, the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), and the Shadow Secretary of State for International Development (Fashion Revolution, 2015e, 2015h; Somers, 2015a, 2016a); it launched its White Paper, 'It's Time for a Fashion Revolution', in Brussels at an event with the Fair Trade Advocacy Office through a partnership with the EU's European Year for Development (EYD2015) (European Union, 2015; Somers, 2015b). It has received public support from such organisations as Greenpeace International (Greenpeace International, 2014), and has been endorsed by global fashion and apparel high street retailer H&M (H&M, 2016).

Motivated by the Rana Plaza disaster, FashRev represents a global community of stakeholders embedded within the RFA movement. Responding to the collapse, FashRev built an innovative space for a diverse range of RFA movement stakeholders to organise efforts, share information, raise questions, and voice their frustration in unconventional and creative ways. For the 8th graders in Philadelphia who donated to the organisation during its infancy, FashRev was an initiative working to combat human rights violations as they related to the global fashion and

apparel industry. Yet the FashRev project is concerned with wide-ranging social and environmental issues, pulling them together in dialogue. Moreover, the FashRev project disrupts the conventional boomerang patterns associated with TLR organisations combating labour rights grievances; FashRev emerged not in response to specific calls from garment workers in Bangladesh or other local stakeholders impacted by the collapse, but from a personal and professional desire to ‘do something’. Organising global fashion-based efforts under a singular frame, the project expressed awareness of the dangers in reproducing essentialist stories—not only in terms of framing garment workers as hapless victims but also with regards to understanding consumers and consumer behaviour, suggesting strategies for consumer engagement which move beyond the boycott/buycott binary. While FashRev actively challenges consumers to reconsider how they engage with their wardrobes, would-be fast-fashion consumers are not singled out. Neither are fast-fashion companies. Despite being based in the UK, the project showcases differences between Country Chapters, highlight diversity not only within the RFA movement but within its pro-fashion niche subfield.

I opened the chapter with lyrics and images of ‘Shopping Bags’. At first glance, the song appears like any other conventional antisweatshop strategy, employing the use of moral batteries to elicit an emotional response by juxtaposing garment workers in Bangladesh against Western fast-fashion consumers. What sets the song apart from convention, however, is its call for reflection. Like the FashRev project, the song is calling for answers. Employing multiple strategies, and in partnership with various stakeholders, FashRev highlights a pro-fashion agenda under the RFA movement. While pro-fashion interests existed within the RFA movement before Rana Plaza collapsed, the disaster worked as a catalyst to inspire certain fashion-based RFA movement stakeholders to organise like never before. Oscillating between online tactics and offline strategies, engaging with elite fashion-based RFA stakeholders, initiatives and organisations, FashRev efforts reflect the multi-mediated nature of the global fashion and apparel industry. In the next chapter, I examine how the FashRev website, which ultimately represents FashRev as a social movement organisation, fares at supporting transparent engagement from within its own community.

Chapter 6 The FashRev website and community engagement

In the previous chapter, I introduced the UK-based pro-fashion organisation Fashion Revolution (FashRev), describing the project's visible structure: its central organisational layout, its wider network, and its 2015 campaign efforts. FashRev is a global initiative which raises awareness on the social and environmental issues plaguing the global fashion and apparel industry. The organisation began as a DIY project, created on a whim by elite RFA movement stakeholders in the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse. The disaster was a catalyst to organise pro-fashion individuals and organisations already working within the RFA movement. In this chapter, I revisit the FashRev website to determine how it compares to other social movement organisations (SMOs) in terms of maximising '[i]nternet potentialities' (della Porta and Mosca, 2009: 771). As a SMO, how well does the FashRev website support its community members to engage with the organisation?

At its surface, the FashRev project appears to disrupt binary frames relating to workers and consumers, exposing connections between production and consumption that challenge conventional efforts from TLR organisations, governments and corporations. The FashRev website presented various realities related to the global fashion and apparel industry and to the lives of both workers and consumers. By unpacking the FashRev website to measure its SMO efficiencies, I am interested in determining how FashRev engages with cyberspace and whether it can 'truly represent a global civil society (Law, 2003: 239). Can the FashRev website support engagement from Bangladeshi garment workers? Does it aim to? Through their website, FashRev organisers encourage an unknown number of supporters, across various countries, to join forces in a diverse yet unified front, harnessing the power of fashion to secure social and environmental justice for people and planet across the global fashion and apparel industry. Understanding whether and how FashRev connects to the wider RFA movement community is important given criticism conventional TLR organisations have faced for efforts which not only fail to address structural inequalities but risk reinforcing them. Post-Rana Plaza, FashRev organised fashion-based efforts under an umbrella campaign and offered pro-fashion strategies

for engagement with the RFA movement. The FashRev website is a central hub for this activity, by communicating aims, disseminating resources, and collating related global efforts through Country Chapters. Applying a website analysis through the lens of Porta and Mosca (2009), discrepancies emerge between the project's strategic vision in theory—the expressed principles driving the initiative—and the nature of its organisation, network, and campaign efforts in practice.

6.1 Website analysis: Unpacking the FashRev website

Digital technologies offer potential for SMOs to expand their community networks and amplify their claims (Carty, 2001; Cottle, 2008; Earl and Schussman, 2002; Soon and Cho, 2013; Tilly, 2004). Websites are instruments which provide SMOs opportunities to connect with their community and create new forms of transnational solidarities. Investigating 261 websites of SMOs across the global justice movement (GJM) in six European countries, Porta and Mosca (2009) identified certain website features for playing a key role in determining whether an SMO is meeting, or hindering, community engagement (Table 6.1).

Website Analysis: Social Movement Organisations (SMOs)	
Information provision	Types (political, etc.) and forms of dissemination (embedded, hyperlink, news section, etc.) of information shared by the campaign. Also, relating to information access, such as usability (easy to locate on the website, etc.), quality (clear and easy to digest, etc.) and availability (is the information free, or is it available for a fee), for example.
Transparency / accountability	Authenticity, credibility, and access to information relating to organisational structure, funding, etc. Also, contact information and general availability.
Identity building	Self-presentation (such as group identity, group history, with links to archival press releases, etc.), ways to connect (email-mailing lists and sign-up forms, etc.) and also campaign branding.

Mobilisation through the web	Using the internet for actions (pressure, petitions, etc.)
Intervention on the digital divide	Acknowledging and addressing the digital divide

*Table 6.1: Five categories for empirically analysing the SMO websites.
Source: della Porta and Mosca (2009)*

According to della Porta and Mosca (2009), '[a] website can fulfil an important function in that it organises a set of meanings, selects a part of reality, and proposes an interpretation of it' (2009: 776). Success in achieving this goal, however, depends on audience perception of credibility and authenticity, as well as how well it interacts with its own community network. The FashRev website offers important insight into the wider RFA movement. This chapter presents and examines data collected from the FashRev website during a specific period. The FashRev website is not a static space; FashRev website designers and content writers may adapt the structure of the website, as well as alter or remove its contents, at any time. Further, there are limitations to what a website can reveal; by conducting a website analysis, researchers can only gather certain types of information. This includes the methodological challenge of capturing or grasping, the offline energy driving architectural decisions behind the scenes. Data collected to analyse the FashRev website include static pages, documents and blog posts (Table 6.2).

Content used in FashRev website analysis	
Static pages	Main website pages presenting seemingly unchanging content, providing no dates and/or author. Pages containing organisation biographies and Country Chapter details were included in this category.
Documents	This material includes press releases and information sheets designed specifically for the press, etc. It also includes campaign-related content that was available for download, such as posters, leaflets, etc.

Blog posts	Webpages presenting new content on an ongoing basis. These webpages were dated, and the name of an author was provided.
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Table 6.2: Content types included in website analysis. (Appendix M)

FashRev was created to fill a gap in the RFA movement landscape, attracting creatives and millennials. The project team felt that other organisations within the movement had failed to capture the attention of a large subset of would-be movement supporters:

Fashion Revolution uses good design, interesting video, beautiful imagery, clever messaging and creative stunts to engage people with the issues, especially the tech-savvy millennials. We believe this is the unique strength of Fashion Revolution. Where other campaigns have made huge in-roads in improving social and environmental conditions in the industry, much of the public remains disengaged with the issues.

Fashion Revolution (2015i)

The FashRev website utilised various web-based tools to capture the attention of a technologically equipped audience. Moreover, aesthetic design was a top priority. As a pro-fashion SMO, a distinct feature of FashRev is its aim to celebrate fashion. Through its website, FashRev pitched fashion as a powerful force for change. The FashRev website presented fashion as an opportunity for consumers to communicate their values:

We want to use the power of fashion to inspire a permanent change in the fashion industry and reconnect the broken links in the supply chain. [...] We need to reconnect through a positive narrative, to understand that we aren't just purchasing a garment or accessory, but a whole chain of value and relationships.

Fashion Revolution (2015l)

The message that fashion is a tool for achieving social change was further reinforced in campaign material published by FashRev, available for download through the website. The FashRev guidebook *How to be a Fashion Revolutionary* offers one example:

Fashion is our chosen skin. The clothes we wear represent how we feel about ourselves. They're our message to the world about who we are. Our clothes say a lot about us, but we don't know all that much about our clothes.

Ditty et al. (2015: 14)

Through this lens, fashion communicates values. FashRev has placed its attention on the wearer: how the wearer feels, and what the wearer wants the world to know about them. There is an explicit assumption that wearers are not just capable of making choices, but that they are able to make choices that reflect their social and cultural values.

6.1.1 Information provision, transparency and identity building

The FashRev website disseminated content in a variety of ways. While there was no 'news' section, the website contained a blog, where posts were updated regularly. Blog posts were mostly written by FashRev staff, but not in all cases. A search bar located at the top of each webpage was available to assist users in site navigation. Alongside blog posts and hyperlinks to the wider RFA movement, FashRev also designed various types of informational packages that were available for users to download for free. These included educational material, industry reports, and guidance for campaign engagement, all aimed at helping its public to unravel the global fashion and apparel industry, which were all hosted on the FashRev website. Although FashRev did not explicitly support boycotts, these resources ranked brands according to social and environmental practices.

Under the website's education page, for example, FashRev supporters were directed to a 'Trump Card Game', a game that prompts learners to rank brands based on various indicators, such as worker rights, monitoring, and transparency. The game suggested participants rank brands by using data from Free2Work, a non-profit organisation which grades companies on social and environmental behaviours (Cook, 2014; Ditty et al., 2015: 28-29; Fashion Revolution, 2014a, 2016b).²⁰ The first FashRev Transparency Index rated 40 brands, grading them with scores through four

²⁰ When checked on 3 Oct 2016, the Free2Work website was not in operation.

different ratings: ‘low’, ‘low-middle’, ‘high-middle’ and ‘top’ rankings (Fashion Revolution and Ethical Consumer, 2016: 6).²¹ While the Transparency Index did not *explicitly* endorse particular brands over others, it aims to ‘celebrate’ brands that publicly disclose information related to their supply chains (Fashion Revolution and Ethical Consumer, 2016: 16). The FashRev campaign action guidebook also directed consumers to resources which ranked brands (Ditty et al., 2015: 27). Further problematising what it means for a company to appropriately support both people and planet, there were discrepancies between the ranking systems promoted on the FashRev website. Ranking Levi Strauss & Co. using the Free2Work database recommended in the instructions of the Trump Card Game (Cook, 2014), for example, would deliver the company with a D- for worker rights. Meanwhile, the FashRev Transparency Index graded Levi Strauss & Co. with the highest score for behaviour when compared to other fashion and apparel companies (Fashion Revolution and Ethical Consumer, 2016: 7-11).

Processes of consumption were tied to education. Guided by the FashRev website, consumers were encouraged to become detectives and decide for themselves how they will engage with the next step. FashRev understands consumers as holding power over companies and, ultimately, workers’ lives, and as such has outsourced actions to consumers, calling on them to use their influence and apply pressure. Through this investigative process, consumers are asked to rethink their purchases based on social and environmental factors:

[...] before you buy something, inform yourself about it. You might find very little or you might discover a lot. Are you comfortable with how much or how little you know?

If you feel unsure, think about the alternatives. Could you buy the same thing [second-hand]? Is there an ethically, sustainably made alternative? Do you really need it? If we think a little more before we buy, *we can change the world one outfit at a time.*

Ditty et al. (2015: 27, Emphases added)

²¹ The Transparency Index was co-authored by FashRev and Ethical Consumer (Fashion Revolution and Ethical Consumer, 2016).

The FashRev website did not overtly call for boycotts. It did, however, promote certain brands, retailers, and suppliers *indirectly* by openly ranking companies. Moreover, the website indirectly endorsed brands owned and operated by FashRev team members. These were not the only resources and companies shared and promoted through the FashRev website.

FashRev also engaged in knowledge transfer by sharing hyperlinks, which directed visitors to the websites of other SMOs. Resources relating to labour rights, human rights, environmental issues, and corporate social responsibility schemes in the global apparel industry, for example, were shared by linking out to other companies and organisations working specifically in those respective areas. Hyperlinks can be positioned strategically as a ‘reputational marker for a site type’ (Rogers, 2013: 45). The FashRev website may have linked to organisations in the wider RFA movement, but did they link back? As part of my analysis of the FashRev website, I conducted a website crawl using Issue Crawler. Issue Crawler is a computer program that pulls, connects, and geographically maps the hyperlinks located within a particular website (Govcom.org, 2014). Using the software, I was able to locate the website network, revealing online relationships and geographically ‘placing’ network actors; a cursory FashRev issue map emerged. The Issue Crawler software revealed that while the FashRev website directly linked to 21 websites, only two of these websites linked back. Regarding the geographic location of network websites, the majority were grounded in the UK (specifically, in London). According to Marres and Rogers (2008), however, this should not be surprising, as ‘processes of issue formation tend to take place at a distance from the sites in which these issues make themselves most forcefully felt’ (2008: 274). Ultimately, the issue map could not capture the geographic scope or scale of the wider community the FashRev website worked to connect due to the integration of social media tools, which were embedded into the architecture of the website.

The FashRev website also shared information which related to the work and educational experiences of FashRev team members. In order to secure legitimacy, indicators supporting SMO credibility are important. According to Flanagan and Metzger (2008), with reference to geographic information, the offering-up of

voluntary information in online spaces is problematic, with matters of authenticity brought into question. Curated pages create a ‘context deficit’ (Flanagin and Metzger, 2008: 140), a potential concern not only with campaign content but also with biographical information of FashRev team members. Issues relating to authenticity are by no means a challenge confined to SMOs, let alone to FashRev. Nonetheless, concerns relating to authenticity can compromise transparency and accountability when it comes to organisational structure (della Porta and Mosca, 2009). Transparency itself was a central theme running throughout the FashRev website:

Fashion Revolution believes in a fashion industry that values people, planet, creativity and profit in equal measure and that positive change starts with transparency, traceability and openness.

It is impossible for us to make sure human rights are respected and that environmental practices are sound without knowing where our products are made, who is making them and under what conditions. This is what we are asking brands and retailers to publicly disclose.

Transparency alone does not represent the bigger systemic change we would like to see for the fashion industry — but it helps us get there. Transparency helps to reveal the structures in place so we can better understand how to change them. Transparency shines a light on issues often kept in the dark.

We believe that more transparency will lead to greater accountability, which eventually will lead to a change in the way business is done. It is an important first step towards positive change.

Fashion Revolution (2015l)

FashRev looked to transparency to address imbalances of power across global supply chains. Turning the issue of transparency back onto the organisation, questions arise which relate to funding and organisational structure. At the time of data collection, inquiring visitors seeking to contact FashRev were informed through a ‘contact us’ page that the project was understaffed and underfunded. In particular, the website highlighted a lack of capacity to handle student requests for information; FashRev would be unavailable for student research leading up to the next campaign launch, which was at the time, 24 April 2015. It was not explicitly clear where or how FashRev secured operational funds. The website was active internationally through

Country Chapters. Yet, information on FashRev's association with individuals and organisations within certain countries was not always made clear.

With respect to identity building, FashRev campaign branding and social media messaging maintained an encouraging tone. While consumers were called on to engage with companies, the role of the FashRev campaign was to celebrate fashion and the website supported this messaging:

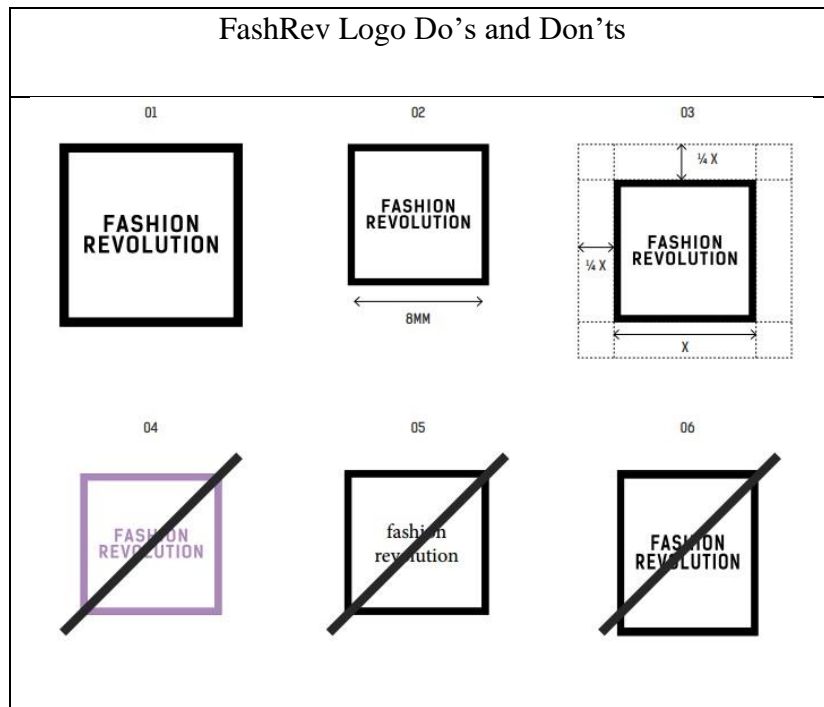
Fashion Revolution Day is not holding companies to account, that is the job of customers and certifiers. Fashion Revolution is here to celebrate the companies who are doing one of these things to be more transparent about who makes their clothes. It's up to shoppers to make sure companies are doing what they say they are.

Fashion Revolution (2014g)

Brand identity involved directly avoiding blame and shame strategies. Although FashRev supporters could engage in efforts aimed at targeting specific companies, FashRev brand material, provided through the website, should only be used to celebrate companies.

The FashRev website promoted the theme of 'unity' by creating a diverse sense of community which encouraged stakeholders from various backgrounds to join the 'revolution'. SMO websites aid in brand management by controlling key messages and are akin to 'electronic business cards' (della Porta and Mosca, 2009: 777).

FashRev maintained control over brand messaging through style guides. The FashRev logo was featured at the top of each website page, and brands, retailers, and producers interested in joining the project were required to follow strict user guidelines (Image 6.1).



*Image 6.1: 'Brand Assets: Logo Do's and Don'ts'.
Source: Fashion Revolution (2015b)*

While FashRev supporters were encouraged to freely download brand material (online campaign material, such as the brand logo, as well as material meant for offline use, such as campaign posters, for example), there were limitations on how the material could be used, so as not to compromise the campaign brand identity. All campaign brand material and website content were protected under copyright, noted at the bottom of each of the campaign's websites. In addition, there was a section of Terms and Conditions, relating to how online content could be used. Information provision, transparency and identity building came together how the FashRev website worked to mobilise its community, as well as its potential for challenging digital divides.

6.1.2 Mobilisation and intervention on the digital divide

FashRev engaged in various online platforms, with social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram integrated into the website. This allowed users to access the SMO using multilateral forms of communications. At the time of data

collection, the majority of the FashRev website pages were blog posts relating to FashRev campaign activity. Although the comments section of blog posts featured on the 2014/2015 website were closed, preventing readers from contributing and sharing their views, social media tools worked to replace this function, playing a key role in FashRev community engagement. While the inability to comment on a blog post blocked public engagement at one level, communication with the SMO was not completely closed. Readers could contact FashRev privately, via email for example, or publicly, via the social media platforms the campaign engaged with. In the wake of Rana Plaza, the FashRev website used digital media not only as a tool to share communications related to pre- and post-Rana Plaza garment worker labour conditions in Bangladesh but also as a tool for strategic actions among and between RFA movement stakeholders. Rana Plaza was used to motivate stakeholders to support FashRev efforts.

FashRev used its website to call on its followers to engage in a form of online ‘multilateral interactivity’ (della Porta and Mosca, 2009: 778), which involved using online applications for FashRev-related discussions. Here, social media tools were used to mobilise stakeholders, amplify actions and spearhead discussions. Specifically, the 2015 campaign asks users to contact companies producing fashion and apparel products and ask for details behind how the products were made. The inquiry was encouraged to take place on social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, on the anniversary of the Rana Plaza collapse. The FashRev website provided suggested language to use in communication with brands: “*I want to thank the people who made my clothes, [insert brand name] #whomademyclothes?*” This engagement opens first by giving thanks to workers, before proceeding to ask the central campaign question. The campaign also suggested taking a ‘selfie’ wearing a product while showing the product label. This action is not intended to shame brands. Rather, it is designed to showcase that consumers want fashion and apparel products that support workers and that they want brands to provide information that can prove it: consumers are talking back to the brands and communicating their (consumer) demands. The companies that responded to this question were celebrated (Knight, 2016).



Image 6.2: #IMadeYourClothes say participants at IndustriALL's world conference on textile, garment, shoe and leather industries.
#GarmentWorkersNeedUnions'
Source: IndustriALL (2016)



Image 6.3: #Repost @craftivists with @repostapp. One of the #FashRev #craftivism mini banners made by @leysfairtrade group in Cambridge using our kits to put up in public for Fashion Revolution Day 24.4.15 #rememberranaplaza #lovefashionhatesweatshops #whomademyclothes?
Source: Fashion Revolution (2014d)

Image 6.2: IndustriAll using FashRev hashtag to focus on unions (left); Image 6.3: Craftivist Collective using FashRev hashtag to focus on 'peaceful protest' in name of Rana Plaza victims (right).

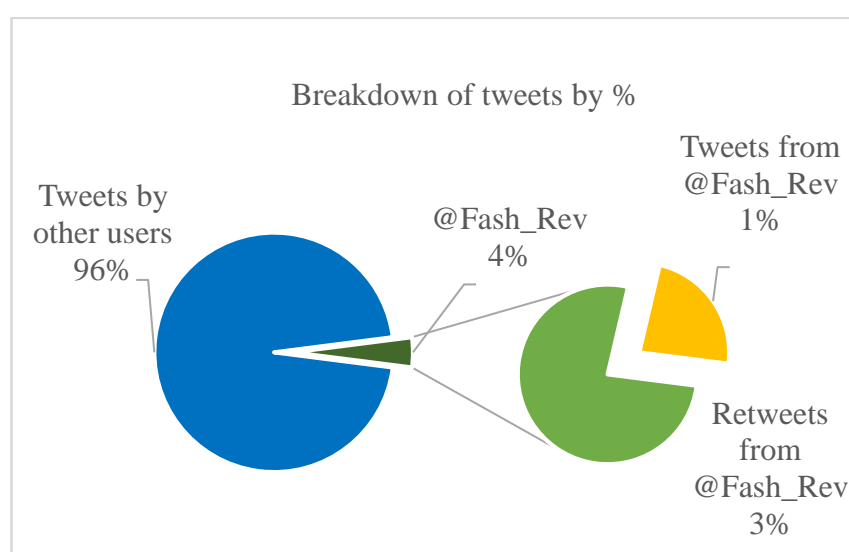
Although the FashRev website worked to control brand identity, members from across the RFA co-opted the FashRev messaging and made their own material to share online, flagging issues most relevant to their own efforts. IndustriALL, for example, adopted the FashRev hashtag but incorporated signs that focused on unionisation (Image 6.2).

During the 2015 FashRev campaign, FashRev used its website to share original text (images, words and video) with followers through social media tools. The campaign also reposted and retweeted content shared by other users on social media platforms, amplifying certain messages.

Twitter Analysis: Total English tweets from March - June, 2015,
using @Fash_Rev campaign hashtags: #FashRev #WhoMadeMyClothes

Number of tweets	
Tweets by other users	43,126
Retweets by @Fash_Rev	1,391
Tweets by @Fash_Rev	424
Total no. of tweets	44,941

Table 6.3: Total number of tweets pulled using campaign hashtags



Graphic 6.1: Percentage of tweets, broken down by group

Despite maintaining Country Chapters across the globe, the website did not explicitly work to intervene on digital divides. Rather, it actively targeted tech-savvy stakeholders, creating a space for them to comfortably engage with project issues. Technology was used as a tool for engagement, but a commitment to hear from stakeholders who may lack the knowledge, tools, or infrastructure to connect with the website was not explicitly prioritised. Beyond calls for engagement with social media, FashRev used its website to promote mobilisation in several other ways: through formal, long-term partnerships (endorsements, sponsorships), through short-term engagements (hosting a FashRev event to raise awareness) and by requests for

financial assistance through a ‘support us’ static page, where individuals could donate to the SMO by purchasing FashRev products such as tops through an e-store (online store). This page also linked to the external crowdfunding campaign websites mentioned in Chapter 5, where supporters could donate funds in exchange for various products and packages, from a t-shirt to a trip to India, depending on the level of donation. Donations to FashRev would go toward funding FashRev-related projects and initiatives.

6.2 Realities and tensions in the FashRev website

In conducting a website analysis, tensions between stakeholder strategies connected to the FashRev network and the FashRev campaign emerged. Siddiqi (2000) argues that ‘reducing the lives of Bangladeshi garment workers to a local variation on either the universally subordinated woman or the global worker exploited by capital obscures the implications of work for these women’ (2000: L-11). To avoid reproducing these narratives, transnational activist stakeholders are challenged to develop and work within systems and frameworks that are ‘cognizant of the local and global processes that create conditions of vulnerability for women and form the asymmetrical planes in which cross-cultural alliances and solidarity practices must happen’ (Chowdhury, 2014: 9).

Harnessing fashion as a tool for education and knowledge exchange, the FashRev website promoted notions of a universal humanity rooted in cosmopolitanism, or ‘globalism’ (Nash, 2008). As a global cosmopolitan project, FashRev aims to transform corporate policies of production (in seeking an increase in global supply chain transparency) and cultures of fashion and apparel consumption (promoting practices of consumption that countered fast-fashion systems). According to Siddiqi (2017), Rana Plaza ‘punctured the idea of the brave new borderless world promised by globalization’ (2009: 276). For FashRev organisers, however, Rana Plaza further strengthened this promise; linking practices of Western consumption to the death of more than 1,130 workers, the FashRev website highlights connectivity, not complicity.

The FashRev website worked to challenge practices of fashion production by exposing a lack of transparency within the industry. And yet, on some pages within the FashRev website, garment worker labour rights were seemingly constrained within the single-story framing transnational researchers such as Brooks (2007), Chowdhury (2009), Seidman (2007) and Siddiqi (2000; 2009) warn against. One example of this can be found in the campaign efforts produced by the FashRev Country Chapter for Germany through its vending machine action (also discussed in Chapter 5). The imagery of workers used within this campaign video showcase already familiar tropes found in transnational activist campaigns for labour rights. ‘The 2 Euro T-shirt’ campaign doesn’t tell us who Manisha is, where she works, how she lives, or how she has come to work under such conditions. ‘The 2 Euro T-shirt’ campaign doesn’t tell us whether Manisha earns 13 cents per day, or per hour. It doesn’t tell us more than this. What it does do, is ask the consumer to consider their position within apparel production. The ‘social experiment’ de-contextualises the worker experience by focusing instead on the emotions of the consumer, and the consumer’s role as the ultimate buyer. It does not offer information on the actual product for sale in the t-shirt vending machine. The single-story remained in circulation, it was just not longer anchored to a company or country. Without context, the single-story is detached from local realities.

While the example from Germany presents a vague story of working conditions within garment making, the website used the very specific story of the Rana Plaza collapse to advance its claims. Here, calls from the FashRev website for financial support were particularly striking. During the 2015 FashRev campaign, stakeholders across the RFA movement were campaigning and lobbying for brands to sign the Accord and to donate to the ILO-sponsored Rana Plaza arrangement, which had not yet met its target (The International Labour Organization, 2014). Meanwhile, the story of the collapse was used as a focal point of the website. Embedded into the origin story of FashRev, it served as the catalyst meant to justify why a fashion revolution was needed.

The FashRev website called on a wide range of individuals and organisations to join forces and sustain momentum around a wide range of issues. With social and

environmental issues framed as interconnected under the umbrella of fashion, the website operated as a coalition magnet (Béland and Cox, 2016). The FashRev website facilitates alliances between diverse and divergent stakeholders by posing a simple question: Who made my clothes? Under this broad question there was space for a wide range of stakeholders to engage with the campaign; a simple question, it drew out social, political, economic and environmental issues as diverse as those related to Human Rights and worker rights, sustainability, creativity, communication, education and transparency and consumption, for example, and the relationship between these issues is made visible. Yet the website framed consumers as holding power over companies and, ultimately, workers' lives. It called on consumers to use their influence and apply a very specific brand of pressure: rather than naming and shaming companies, those making strides toward transparency should be celebrated. By showcasing the power of supply and demand, consumers were framed as having the 'right' to seek information that would aid them in making better 'choices'. The website sounded a call to arms that involved, among other things, challenging consumers to reconsider how they engaged with their clothing. Although the website did not directly call for boycotts, it indirectly supported boycotts by sharing and creating resources which worked to rank brands in relation to their social and environmental footprints. The logic of capitalism was neither explicitly challenged nor endorsed, and any structural inequalities facing consumers was set aside.

The FashRev website drew together diverse social and environmental challenges, from labour rights issues to pesticides in cotton farming, presenting them as interconnected. Diverse stakeholders were also pulled together, connected through Country Chapters. The organisational structure of FashRev required that the Global Coordination Team, the Global Advisory Committee and Country Chapters communicate with one another regularly for guidance and feedback (Fashion Revolution, 2016e). The UK-based FashRev stakeholders held ultimate control over Country Chapter efforts. Nonetheless, there were key differences between Country Chapters. The FashRev website encouraged diversity across its network, and the organisation's 2015 mission was to bring 'everyone together to make that happen' (Fashion Revolution, 2015b). By pulling social and environmental considerations

together under one umbrella, the project encouraged stakeholders across its network to raise awareness on various issues. Differences between Country Chapters was made clear through examples from Kenya, Bangladesh and Germany (Chapter 5). While it is not surprising to see differences between each Country Chapter, the priorities of each were striking. That the Kenya chapter would focus on local manufacturing was not unexpected, as this is consistent with issues raised in academic research: Kenya has experienced an influx of clothing through the second-hand clothing trade, which has been critiqued for contributing to the decline of local fashion and apparel manufacturing sectors in countries such as Kenya (Brooks, 2013; Brooks and Simon, 2012). It was also an approach consistent with FashRev project's 2015 strategy, part of which was to emphasise creativity (Fashion Revolution, 2015b). The Country Chapter for Bangladesh took a different approach, showcasing and celebrating manufacturing practices that supported FashRev's 2015 objectives. The Bangladesh Country Chapter mentioned the Rana Plaza disaster but did not mention actions geared toward supporting victims of the collapse. They also did not apply pressure on brands to comply with industry strategies to support labour rights in Bangladesh (Fashion Revolution, 2014c).

There are tensions and discrepancies between FashRev aspirations and how the FashRev website supports community engagement: FashRev seeks to celebrate certain brands ahead of others, but by supporting and creating systems which rank companies based on social and environmental features the FashRev website indirectly endorses boycotts; FashRev claims it is open for partnerships with individuals and organisations from across the RFA community movement landscape, but actively discourages efforts which negatively single out companies, tactics typically employed by TLR organisations to support workplace grievances raised by stakeholders in Bangladesh; FashRev strives to disrupt systems of fashion but does not directly confront systems of oppression that facilitate structural inequality; FashRev wants to avoid telling the 'single-story' but has developed content, circulated through its website, which tells stories which lack contextual nuance.

Using the FashRev website (organisation, campaign and network) as a window into the wider RFA community, this chapter examines how FashRev engages with

members of its own community and with the wider RFA movement landscape on issues related to garment worker rights in Bangladesh, and in Rana Plaza. Through its website, FashRev claimed to represent a diverse group of RFA movement stakeholders. Drawing on analytic filters from previous research investigating the potential of the internet for SMOs (della Porta and Mosca, 2009), a website analysis reveals thematic tensions between the FashRev organisation and its own community members. That different social movement stakeholders would have distinct opinions related to their aims and is not surprising, however. Indeed, the FashRev website was structured in such a way that while it promoted unity, it left space for difference by embedding social media tools and showcasing diversity through Country Chapters.

6.3 Conclusion

Although FashRev did not set out to focus its efforts on the Rana Plaza collapse, it used the collapse to harness engagement on a multitude of social and environmental challenges which it views as plaguing the global fashion and apparel industry. Despite having the potential to showcase the needs workers and their families impacted by the disaster the FashRev website strategically focused on rallying and coordinating an international network of fashion-loving RFA movement stakeholders. An analysis of the FashRev website hints at discrepancies between FashRev and its movement colleagues. The most obvious of which relates to its funding model. Seeking donations for its efforts, FashRev simultaneously competed with other RFA movement stakeholders working to raise funds for the victims of the Rana Plaza collapse through the ILO Arrangement. Following filters presented in research by della Porta and Mosca (2009) to determine how SMO websites enable community engagement, an analysis of the FashRev website reveals that the SMO supports Bangladeshi garment workers in principle. In practice, however, it does so only tangentially.

The FashRev website shared knowledge through blog posts, educational resources, industry reports, and through campaign guidelines and related campaign material; FashRev understood knowledge sharing related to transparency in supply chains as a central pathway toward achieving a global RFA industry and its website provided the

infrastructure to do so. It also provided a means to organise. By embedding social media tools into the website interface, the website became an interactive, multilateral platform for communication. Social media was harnessed to reflect the needs of FashRev's target audience, and the popularity of the campaign hashtags highlights a desire for knowledge sharing within the RFA community. The website's extensive capacity to harness social media tools was not the only feature that made it unique. As an ever-evolving, ever-expanding, and ever-learning global project, its real strength rests in its capacity to corral pro-fashion stakeholders from within the RFA movement under a united framework.

The FashRev campaign, showcased through the website, offered no specific and/or actionable demands, building an identity which broadened the landscape, pulling diverse stakeholders together and reinforcing the campaign as a coalition magnet (Béland and Cox, 2016). The specific aims of the 2015 campaign were strategically ambiguous, designed to change over time, in consultation with community stakeholders. The website supported ambiguity by inviting stakeholders to engage with the project under a wide range of issues, signalling to users that the SMO was open to capture and represent the wide-ranging aims and efforts which relate to the RFA movement. While the FashRev website told a broad enough version of the story to enable a coalition of stakeholders to join forces, it muted certain other versions of the story. Herein lies a central tension of the website's ability to support community engagement. Although the website held the structural capacity to support garment interests in countries such as Bangladesh and elsewhere by integrating communications from local stakeholders, FashRev's brand identity and terms of engagement dictated that FashRev messaging maintain a positive tone. The website aimed to unravel the nature of global fashion and apparel production and presented transparency as a meaningful driver for change. Despite producing educational materials and sharing resources aimed at problematising the single-story, the FashRev website itself used the Rana Plaza collapse to tell its own version of the global fashion and apparel story.

The tension lies between maintaining a broad enough theme to capture the aims and interests of multiple and diverse stakeholders, while not losing sight of the needs and

interests of the very individual whose tragedy sparked the revolution in the first place. The challenge for FashRev organisers is to determine how to bridge this gap, connecting those concerned with improving social and environmental challenges facing the global fashion and apparel industry while holding space to consider uncomfortable stories related not only to connectivity but also complicity. An analysis of the FashRev website further demonstrates a need for offline investigations into RFA movement stakeholder efforts and understandings, including with individuals formally and/or informally connected to the FashRev campaign. In the following chapters, I move my investigation offline to examine the aims and efforts of elite stakeholders engaged in the wider RFA movement. Drawing on participant observation and data collected from 42 qualitative interviews conducted across various country locations, I examine the views of elite RFA movement stakeholders engaged in efforts to support garment worker rights, post-Rana Plaza, and reveal a diversity of efforts at play within the wider movement, including those which harness fashion as a tool of engagement.

Chapter 7 Behind the (online) scene: Unravelling the efforts of RFA movement stakeholders

When Rana Plaza collapsed, the widespread media coverage it garnered meant that transnational stakeholders learned of the disaster before any formal ‘boomerang’ organising on the part of local actors could take place. Although detailed calls for support from victims of the disaster and their families would eventually make their way through transnational channels via local organisations, the sheer scale of the catastrophe captured the immediate attention of RFA movement stakeholders; the disaster itself was a call for action. The Guardian’s Lucy Siegle (2014: 1) describes how the disaster captured the imagination of onlookers as recovery efforts unfolded:

The news of the collapse brought with it, for Western consumers, the reality that there was a very real possibility that they were wearing something that had been made in the ruined factory that they could now see on their screens. This was the link, a visceral connection beyond the natural human sympathy most tragedies evoke, that guarantee a reaction. [...] At the risk of searching too hard for a silver lining in the dust cloud that hung over Savar for weeks after the event, the Rana Plaza catastrophe has given us one thing: a moment where collectively we listened to the dying and rescued workers. For a brief moment we heard their stories.

(2014: 1)

The collapse brought tremendous attention to garment making in Bangladesh, creating opportunities for RFA movement stakeholders to support efforts they may not have otherwise engaged with, including initiatives such as the Accord and the Alliance, as well as FashRev.

The disaster held a spotlight over brands producing in the building, and in the aftermath of the tragedy, stories from victims were documented through national and international media coverage. What struck Joseph (Other_06), a UK-based researcher, educator and organiser working within the RFA movement, was how media coverage of the disaster captured the labels of certain brands, also pulled from the rubble. He recalled a previous incident, where a high street fast-fashion company had disputed media coverage linking their brand to child labour in India. The

company claimed the journalist used fraudulent evidence. But in the case of Rana Plaza, he told me, there could be no denying it; the evidence was there in live media coverage, evidence which connected Western brands, and, through association, their consumers, to death and destruction:

The reporting was relentless because it was such a huge, long drawn out tragedy, with people being found in the wreckage, and the numbers of people who died, and then all the campaigns about compensation, it just turned it into a really long-drawn-out process. And then, when Primark labels and clothing were found in the wreckage, suddenly it dawned on me that Primark couldn't argue that this footage was fake. It really, really, hit me. They couldn't argue that the footage from Rana Plaza was fake and that their goods weren't really being produced in that factory.

The collection and documentation of brand labels while recovery efforts were underway also struck Emma (Org_03), an experienced organiser engaged in campaigns seeking compensation for victims of the collapse. In her experience, connecting brands to workers was incredibly complicated work. She felt it was telling how rescuers and other stakeholders at the site of the collapse understood the importance of 'knowing' which brands were in the building and had foresight—even in the midst of disaster—to recover whatever evidence they could. What struck Kristen (Fash_09), a UK-based designer, educator and organiser, was that the collapse could have been prevented: "I watched a documentary afterwards, [...] that told the story of all the warnings and all the signs, and I just found it hugely upsetting." For Jenny (Ind_05), a senior communications specialist working at a European-based RFA movement organisation, it was important to consider the circumstances which led to disaster: the warning signs were there, but warning signs alone were not enough to stop production. For Alice (Fash_10), a fashion-based educator, consultant and entrepreneur, the collapse exemplified the need for urgent change and sustained commitment toward achieving alternatives: "The world really, really, needs quite drastic different options for how we live in it, and I really try to not do things that don't somehow feed into that."

In the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse, RFA movement stakeholders engaged in various types of efforts aimed at improving the global fashion and apparel industry. In this chapter, I draw on interviews with 42 RFA movement stakeholders active across the movement in the wake of the collapse. I move behind the (online) scene of the FashRev project to examine the wider RFA movement community. FashRev was not the only initiative to leverage the collapse; other stakeholders harnessed the disaster in unique ways, engaging with notions of fashion and digital technologies, as well as supporting strategic partnerships. In this chapter, I examine each stakeholder category separately, and in turn, highlighting specific themes related to efforts across each. My analysis finds that irrespective of stakeholder category, transnational efforts within the RFA movement in the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse supported knowledge exchange as a primary pathway for social change. While TLR organisation-based and industry-based stakeholders recycled conventional efforts, so too did certain fashion-based stakeholders. Some, however, engaged in efforts which were distinct from their movement colleagues, disrupting convention by holding space for conversation.

Across the global RFA movement landscape, it is challenging to map efforts by geographic location. In the global culture industry (Lash and Lury, 2007), objects cannot be contained by geographic boundaries. Even within a classic boomerang pattern, for example, calls for support may originate from garment workers in one location, be picked-up by transnational labour rights organisation-based stakeholders in a second location, and target industry-based stakeholders in the third location. It is also problematic to map RFA movement stakeholders by geographic location. Interviewees and informants worked, travelled and lived in various multiple locations, and could be involved with numerous transnational projects and initiative at any given time. Nonetheless, some form of categorisation is needed, not only to draw comparisons between the post-Rana Plaza actions of RFA movement stakeholders but also to present research and analysis in a structured and coherent way. By organising stakeholders into imperfect categories based on ideal types (Swedberg, 2018), it becomes possible to reveal similarities and differences between stakeholder groups. Irrespective of stakeholder category or geographic location, the

RFA movement interviewees and informants I encountered were either engaged in projects that focused specifically on the disaster or were involved with initiatives tangentially connected to the labour rights of Bangladeshi garment workers, post-Rana Plaza.

7.1 Fashion-based stakeholders

Fashion-based stakeholders engaged in efforts which targeted fashion consumers, industry stakeholders, and government organisations. For these stakeholders, the collapse highlighted the ways in which fashion and apparel production and consumption are tied to both people and the planet. They viewed the social and environmental challenges associated with the global fashion and apparel industry as interconnected and used various tools, including notions of fashion digital technologies, to draw attention to what they perceived as a central problem: patterns of fast-fashion production and consumption.

For Elizabeth (Fash_04), a fashion-based entrepreneur and organiser interested in reforming industry behaviour, it was simply illogical to prioritise the environment ahead of labour rights—connecting the dots between them made simple sense: “What good is it if you are environmentally friendly if you are also like, you know, allowing people to die making your products. It doesn't make sense.” In line with Elizabeth’s view, Alice (Fash_10), told me that she witnessed the most “meaningful, urgent change taking place” when she saw “any evidence of people having a deeper connection to nature, to the way things are made, to the people who make them.” Alice viewed the social and the environmental as intimately connected. For Sophia (Fash_08), a leading fashion-based entrepreneur and RFA movement spokesperson, social and environmental issues were interrelated but also separate and distinct, each requiring a unique approach. Sophia believed it was up to individual stakeholders engaged in efforts across the industry to decide for themselves how they would manage prioritising issues, as she viewed it impossible for stakeholders to account for every challenge. For Kristen (Fash_09), a researcher, consultant and campaign organiser, fashion-based efforts were about much more than the material objects in question: “It is about the greater good. [...] And it’s about something that’s bigger

than an individual. So it's about connecting to the wider community. [...] It's about being mindful, reflexive, it's about resilience, and it's about people." Here, social and environmental issues collide in notions of community, through the practice of 'mindful reflexivity'.

7.1.1 Fashion as a tool for knowledge exchange: Challenging the single-story

Throughout their efforts, fashion-based stakeholders found that the materiality of clothing worked as a productive tool for citizen engagement which could be harnessed to foster knowledge transfer. Eileen (Fash_03), a leading UK-based fashion-based activist entrepreneur, for example, worked on projects that sought to reform consumer, industry, organisation and government behaviour by sharing information and resources which supported transparency. She shared with me her view that governments should be implementing and enforcing regulations that protected both workers and the environment. Like Eileen, Sophia (Fash_08), Kristen (Fash_09), Alice (Fash_10), and Nikki (Fash_11), also engaged in efforts aimed at reforming consumer, industry and government behaviour. Sophia (Fash_08) organised fashion events, where she brought consumers, industry stakeholders and government representatives together to share knowledge and experience related to fashion and apparel production. For Sophia, establishing strategic partnerships was an essential component of her work, as these helped to finance her initiatives. Kristen (Fash_09), engaged in efforts aimed at industry, government and consumers, which focused on raising awareness on social and environmental challenges across the global fashion and apparel industry. Like Eileen, Sophie and Kristen, Alice and Nikki also believed that access to information related to the process of making would help stakeholders to better connect people with planet.

Alice (Fash_10) was interested in the circular economy, and also with knowledge exchange relating to the 'making' of products. Nikki (Fash_11) too, also a fashion-based educator, consultant and entrepreneur, engaged in efforts which supported information sharing on issues surrounding the circular economy and processes of 'making'. The act of making, for these stakeholders, provided space and time to contemplate social and environmental challenges at work across product supply

chains. Marie (Fash_05), a UK-based entrepreneur, volunteer, writer, and activist, focused her efforts on consumer education and skills training, as well as corporate lobbying. Marie was concerned that high street fashion consumers did not understand the kind of labour that went into producing fashion and apparel products. She was interested in reforming both consumer and industry behaviour and engaged in efforts that helped consumers make connections between their consumption habits and labour rights violations. Jane (Fash_06) and Harriot (Fash_07) engaged with the RFA movement in a similar way. Equally, they were connected to efforts geared at educating consumers, and they, like Marie, partnered with transnational labour rights organisations on campaigns toward achieving their aims.

Kristen (Fash_09) was particularly concerned with issues related to understanding how design could better support the circular economy and was engaged in partnerships with designers, industry, and consumer stakeholders. In raising awareness, Kristen explored the act of ‘making’: “I found that through demystifying the process of making, it provoked questions. [...] That was something I had been aware of for a long time, in my own practice and through my own research”. Clothing could be harnessed as an entry point into wider conversations relating to social and environmental issues. Crucial in this work, however, was pulling back on the use of certain terminologies. Below, Kristen recalls a workshop she ran pre-Rana Plaza:

To have a wider systemic change, it’s not about preaching to the converted. It’s about that different audience. And they could possibly switch off with some of the language that we use. I think language is a key part of the dialogue within that area. Within my workshops, I didn’t use the word sustainability, or activism, or anything, it was a very kind of informal pitch and it was about engaging them. And as they engage with those processes of making, um, sustainability and activism did emerge, but it was about seeding it in through a making process, rather than parachuting in with all of these issues to a cold audience. Maybe it’s about equipping them with an alternative approach before having that discussion. And about being open-minded too, because I suppose it’s different decisions for everybody, and even a small change is better than no change. So, it’s a really complex landscape.

Clothing created space for Kristen to engage citizens in conversations related to the materiality of ‘making’. By examining the making process, Kristen was interested in “seeding in” social and environmental issues, not “parachuting in”, and found that by avoiding certain words, citizens were able to raise issues on their own. This strategy relates to strategies called for by Eileen (Fash_04), who believed a new form of protest was required to create social change, and that clothing was an important strategic tool toward achieving it:

You know, there is a limit to the number of people who are going to be out on the streets, chaining themselves, literally to the, you know, the front of Benetton. We've got to look at different ways, you know, in which the normal citizen can use their voice and their money which they spend on clothing to actually say 'Look, you know, I love the clothes but I want to see a difference in the way you're sourcing your garments.'

This new form of protest involved communicating with brands and engaging with them through non-confrontational tactics. While Kristen and Eileen stressed the materiality of clothing as a tool for meaningful engagement and connections, Alice (Fash_10) shared with me how she viewed the significance of clothing as both material and symbolic: “It's everything to do with how we wear clothes, it's not just the industry side of it, but it's the entire study of what it means to clothe ourselves”. Alice felt that clothing was a tool that could be used to connect people:

There is just one link. Where we can tell the story of what it means for these things to be made in this place, and we can tell them the story of what it means to the families and to the community, you know, first hand [...] That's just an example of one of the ways it feels like there is a real direct action taking place.

Here, Alice stressed the importance of challenging the single-story, with the act of challenging the single-story is itself a form of direct action. Post-Rana Plaza, fashion-based stakeholders felt that challenging single-story narratives was particularly important. They were concerned that the foreign and national media coverage of Rana Plaza had tainted the reputation of responsible manufacturing in Bangladesh. “Rana Plaza is Bangladesh”, Ismail (Fash_01), an educator, organiser, and fashion-based entrepreneur based in Dhaka, told me, but “accidents happen everywhere”. Ismail engaged in efforts which called on industry-based stakeholders

in Bangladesh to rethink their practices, as they related to social and environmental impacts and saw transparency as a means to shift consumer thinking related to the Bangladesh brand. He felt that if consumers had improved access to information surrounding how a company operated in Bangladesh, they would reform their purchasing practices. With improved transparency, Ismail saw a business case for responsible fashion in businesses which challenged single-story narratives. He was, however, concerned with the up-front cost of responsible production for industry stakeholders in Bangladesh—the initial financial investment—and stressed a need for patience: change is “not possible in one day. It takes time”.

Reputation management relating to Bangladesh was also a concern for Elizabeth (Fash_04). In the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse, Elizabeth volunteered on various other projects but shared with me that she felt a sense of hesitation to work on projects which highlighted the collapse because she was concerned that industry stakeholders in Bangladesh would feel alienated. She felt it was important to highlight positive efforts taking place within the country. Mark (Fash_02), a fashion-based entrepreneur and organiser who had spent time in Bangladesh with garment workers and other industry stakeholders, also wanted to share positive stories. Doing so, he believed, would help consumers avoid making generalisations. He wanted Western consumers to understand that not all labour conditions for garment workers in Bangladesh reflect those of Rana Plaza: not all fashion and apparel products made in Bangladesh were made under conditions that violated worker rights. As an entrepreneur, he hired workers in Bangladesh to produce fashion and apparel-related products for sale in Western markets and felt that garment worker voices should be driving transnational agendas. For Mark, alternative fashion and apparel products, such as the ones he sold, were a means of telling a different story.

7.1.2 Harnessing ‘the digital’ as a tool for community engagement

Fashion-based interviewees engaged in efforts aimed at reforming either consumer, industry or government behaviour, as well as the behaviour of international organisations and institutions, through policies and practices, both inside and outside of Bangladesh. Stakeholders viewed digital technologies, in varying degrees, as a means toward accomplishing these aims. For Ismail, digital technologies were

powerful resources. He was excited at the possibilities of digital technologies and was interested in how they might be used to aid stakeholders in tracking their products and measuring social and environmental footprints, using mobile devices, for example. Digital technologies, for Ismail, held potential to support transparency. Other fashion-based stakeholders harnessed social media tools as a way to connect with new and existing audiences, and also to share information. However, they felt there were strong limitations to such platforms, and that online engagement could never replace offline efforts. Take Kristen (Fash_09), for example:

[P]eople are dipping in and out (of social media) all the time. So how do you hold their attention? [...]. Although the digital is really important, allowing you to connect with new audiences, it can't replace that 'being around a table in real-time'. And I think they are equally important, but maybe there are different approaches for different situations, or for different parts of a project.

Marie (Fash_05), Jane (Fash_06), and Harriot (Fash_07) echo Kristen's insight and agree that 'the digital' offers limited potential. Co-organising an upcoming event, for example, they shared with me that although they had created a Facebook events page, where it appeared that there was significant interest, they felt that they had no way of really knowing how many people would attend. Stakeholder knowledge related to social media tools also impacted whether and how they used certain platforms. Jane, for example, joked that she could only share the event on Facebook because she didn't know how to 'Twitter'. Like Jane, Sophia shared that she had limited knowledge of certain aspects of digital technologies; she was unable to fully harness the potential of social media tools to reach new and existing audiences.

7.1.3 The use of strategic partnerships to advance claims

Fashion-based stakeholders used both clothing and digital technologies as strategic tools to enhance citizen engagement on efforts related to social and environmental challenges associated with fashion and apparel production and consumption. They also used strategic partnerships as another means to support their aims. Establishing partnerships, however, was not always an easy decision, as certain interviewees felt such decisions may compromise their credibility within the movement. Kristen (Fash_09), for example, struggled with forming partnerships with certain industry-based stakeholders:

A lot of people are critical: ‘You shouldn’t be working with these retailers’ and saying, ‘They’re the enemy’. But possibly to influence change maybe it is about working with them, and maybe that’s about systemic change. It’s not going to happen immediately, and it will take time, but maybe being engaged in the conversation is better than not being involved.

Kristen favoured engagement and was willing to risk her reputation to do so.

Systemic change is highlighted as something that will take time, a perspective which echoes that of stakeholders in Bangladesh, calling for patience in resolving issues.

For Nikki (Fash_11), selecting which stakeholders to partner with was a difficult decision, particularly when partnering with large companies:

I think if you'd asked me five years ago, I would have said that I would never work with a big retailer, I'm much more interested in working on a kind of localised level, but having seen how big cuts are happening, and it's much harder to secure funding to run these kinds of projects on a community level and seeing the appetite of big retailers, such as [...], to start experimenting in this area, you know, by partnering with them this time we were able to offer two days of free workshops to people.

Nikki’s view on partnering with corporations had changed over time, with the reality of financial pressures, playing a key role in her decision-making process. For Elizabeth (Fash_04), strategic partnerships were a way of securing access to certain stakeholders. In Bangladesh, Elizabeth was keen on partnering with large industry stakeholders. She wanted to implement training programmes that would target designers, factory management and workers, and adjusted efforts to secure strategic partnerships: despite viewing worker safety and environmental issues as interconnected, she chose to specifically focus her attention on one issue, based on opportunities to form strategic partnerships: “There is a lot of focus on women's empowerment” she told me. “You almost need to be thinking in that way to really key in with all of the other initiatives that are having success and need more support.” For Elizabeth, an entire mind shift on the factory floor was required to support worker rights, and she viewed educational training programmes as one avenue toward achieving systemic change. Forming strong partnerships was important for Elizabeth, and she was willing to alter her efforts—her “thinking”—to better meet the needs of the stakeholders she sought partnerships with. While fashion-based stakeholders worried whether strategic partnerships were always

appropriate to advance their claims, they negotiated whether or not to form partnerships by weighing what they perceived to be positive and/or negative outcomes.

7.2 Labour rights organisation-based stakeholders

Post-Rana Plaza, labour rights organisation-based stakeholders focused on securing financial compensation for victims, on establishing strategic partnerships to support fire and building safety, such as the Accord, and on improving access to collective bargaining for garment workers. Like their fashion-based movement colleagues, these stakeholders also harnessed fashion and digital technologies as a means of engagement.

7.2.1 Fashioning new audience engagements through storytelling

For certain labour rights organisation-based stakeholders, fashion was a tool to widen movement support. Andrew (Org_02), for example, an experienced organiser, saw fashion as a helpful campaign tool to use as a conversation starter because it worked to attract citizens that may not otherwise engage in activism. He felt that fashion created space for storytelling and for new forms of engagement with social justice issues. Andrew was primarily concerned with efforts that sought economic justice across the global fashion and apparel industry and believed that fashion and apparel companies exploited workers to maximise profits. He lobbied for both governments and industry to change their practices, supporting efforts such as protests or petitions which sought to expose corporate misconduct. Jude (Org_01), also an experienced organiser, echoed Andrew's concern and approach. Jude sought system reform and engaged in efforts which called on the general public to demand corporations be held accountable for practices and behaviour that he viewed were corrupt and exploitative. In the context of Bangladesh, and in the wake of the Rana Plaza disaster, Andrew and Jude focused on initiatives that addressed worker compensation, as well as initiatives that supported the Accord, calling on companies to commit to addressing fire and building safety in Bangladesh. Lucy (Org_11), an experienced campaigner with a European-based labour rights-related organisation, echoed the perspectives of Andrew and Jude, but engaged with fashion in a slightly

different way, depending on the nature and geographic location of related efforts. Lucy was engaged in projects which ran across various European countries. Each country throughout her organisation's network had a unique audience, which she felt would respond differently to the use of fashion; although fashion was an interesting tool, Lucy felt its usage was only appropriate in certain contexts. For these labour rights organisation-based stakeholders, fashion played an important role in attracting attention to widen support related to the boomerang efforts they worked on. As these RFA movement stakeholders turned to boycotts as a last resort, they were challenged with the task of engaging fashion and apparel consumers on issues related to brands and gaining their voice of support against labour rights violations without directly turning consumers away from purchasing fast-fashion.

Whether based in Bangladesh or outside of Bangladesh, labour rights organisation-based interviewees drew connections between systems of fast-fashion and labour exploitation. They asked citizens and fast-fashion consumers alike to lobby for social change but avoided calls for boycotts, stressing that workers needed jobs. Farzi (Org_04), Abdul (Org_05), Kamal (Org_09), and Ishrat (Org_10), for example, felt Western consumers played a central role in supporting worker rights. Farzi, an experienced labour organiser, viewed Western consumers as necessary for women's empowerment:

We are talking about 4 million workers that are working in this industry, and the majority of them are female workers, it's over 85%. They just started to know what economic freedom is, and it's a long way to go to get women empowerment, and I know the [fast-fashion] consumers, they really want to see women empowered, but if you really want to see that you need to buy. But buy with care. Be accountable consumers.

Farzi hoped that consumers would be 'accountable' for their role in supporting the 'economic freedom' of garment workers, women workers in particular. Despite fighting against economic growth at the expense of worker rights, she wanted the industry to succeed and felt it was important to measure change over time. But what does it mean to be an 'accountable consumer'? For Farzi, it means engaging with brands directly, using their voice to seek information:

Ask your brand that you want to know more about these workers who are behind these labels. How they are paid, how they have been treated, whether they are working in a safer place or not, and [the consumer's] voice really makes a difference.

The emphasis here is on the consumer's voice, and not their patterns of consumption. While labour rights organisation-based stakeholders may have supported sartorial dissent, they voiced concern that fashion-based efforts distracted attention away from 'boomerang' patterns. The media landscape is competitive, Emma (Org_03) told me. She associated fashion-based efforts with 'feel good' stories, which she felt were shifting media attention away from stories which shed light on continued worker grievances. Suzie (Org_12), an experienced labour organiser, felt that the FashRev initiative, in particular, drew attention away from efforts calling for worker compensation:

I think it's just unfortunate that the amount of media attention that they're trying to get, you know, especially in Europe, they got some decent coverage, that for that coverage to um I don't, you know, I'm concerned about that coverage, of this very watered down Fashion Revolution message happening through the expulsion of the message Rana Plaza victims still not having received their fair compensation.

Suzie's concerns echo findings from the FashRev website analysis: not only was FashRev actively fundraising for its own efforts while the Rana Plaza victims fund remained underfinanced, but media coverage is also competitive. Here, FashRev was seen as drawing attention away from the collapse. Moreover, Suzie was concerned that fashion-based 'feel-good' stories came with a diluted message, and Suzie was also concerned that such coverage would turn consumers away from fast-fashion companies, and toward alternative 'responsible' businesses—businesses she was sceptical supported workers:

[...] smaller brands and designers that are trying to get their names out, and talk up this more positive fashion thing, but, you know, like a lot of these groups that are advocating for these small companies, like they're not necessarily fully disclosing where they're getting their products from. I don't have enough information to evaluate and discern whether or not their products are coming from sweatshop conditions. I think there is a much deeper level of due diligence that many of these smaller companies need to be doing.

There was not enough information, she argued, for consumers to make these choices. Transparency regarding worker rights was an issue for all companies, no matter their size, and Suzie felt that the consumers should apply the same level of scrutiny to smaller brands as they would a large, fast-fashion company.

7.2.2 Issue prioritisation and the role of consumption

Not all labour rights organisation-based stakeholders agreed on the best strategies to support social change. In Bangladesh, Mohammed (OrgInfo_03) and Nasir (OrgInfo_04), senior managers at international NGOs, shared with me their view that efforts seeking behaviour reform through voluntary corporate avenues were insufficient. They believed the Bangladesh government was colluding with industry stakeholders for financial gain, compromising garment worker rights in the process. Mohammed and Nasir engaged in efforts which sought to raise awareness on issues related to corruption and worker intimidation, and also on what they viewed as inadequate support the victims of the collapse had received. In the wake of Rana Plaza, they worked on projects closely tied to the disaster, undertaking research on the full extent of the havoc and destruction Rana Plaza inflicted on workers and their families. Like Mohammed and Nasir, Amir (Org_06) and Karim (Org_08), were also involved in conducting research into the collapse. They wrote reports, sought compensation for victims, and called on the Bangladesh government, as well as industry stakeholders, to reform practices and behaviour to ensure another disaster like Rana Plaza will not happen again.

Farzi (Org_04), Abdul (Org_05), Kamal (Org_09), and Ishrat (Org_10)—all labour rights organisation-based stakeholders working in Bangladesh—worked at organisations which partnered with foreign stakeholders—including industry stakeholders—to reform practices and behaviour. They shared information related to workplace grievances with foreign companies and organisations and also worked on initiatives designed to educate workers on their rights. Labour rights organisation-based interviewees and informants not based in Bangladesh mainly initiated efforts in response to calls from partner organisations ‘on the ground’ in Bangladesh. In the wake of the collapse, Emma (Org_03), Lucy (Org_13), and Suzie (Org_014), all experienced labour rights organisers, prioritised securing immediate compensation

for the victims of Rana Plaza and ensuring European and North American brands committed to signing the Accord. Organising public demonstrations and raising petitions, Emma, Lucy, and Suzie shared information related to specific cases/grievances with the general public, including fashion and apparel consumers. They engaged in efforts that mainly targeted industry, specifically, brands and retailers based in European, North American, and UK markets.

Lucy (Org_13), for example, a campaigner at a European organisation, prioritised efforts which involved publicly shaming European retailers and brands on issues related to the collapse. For Lucy, urgent appeals for compensation were a priority in the wake of the collapse. Public campaigning which targeted companies took shape only when efforts to resolve grievances failed in private negotiations. Lucy's organisation operated in response to 'boomerang' calls for action from stakeholders in countries producing products for sale to mostly European markets. If an urgent appeal was received and industry stakeholders tied to the grievance were not based in Europe, Lucy would coordinate with partner organisations who could take up the cause. Her organisation would then engage in solidarity actions as a show of support.

Issue prioritisation was not always so simple. Henry (Org_13) told me that it would be too simplistic to imagine prioritising one issue over another because within each issue there are multiple moving parts. Using the example of core labour principles, Henry shared how issues are related but distinct, such as freedom of association, forced labour and child labour. He was referring to the challenge for companies to navigate issue prioritisation. Companies, he argued, may be more flexible on one aspect compared to another, depending on the particular context; companies inevitably pay more attention to certain features over others, depending on their own needs at any given time. Other labour rights organisation-based stakeholders were confronted with similar challenges.

In Bangladesh, boomerang calls for support from foreign stakeholders in the wake of Rana Plaza were also a way to secure personal safety, when stakeholders felt that engaging with the Bangladesh government directly was not an option. Fearing for their welfare, Farzi and Kamal engaged in partnerships with foreign stakeholders to

secure their safety. Even when they gained support, however, limitations were placed on their actions. Farzi shared with me how she lost funding from a large international NGO, who was previously a major partner. The NGO had claimed that working with Farzi and her organisation was perceived as too risky for their own funders; Farzi was too political. Issue prioritisation was, therefore, further complicated by external factors. Lucy, for example, told me how she had to shift her focus for a period of time away from efforts calling for compensation for victims, and instead focus on securing signatories for the Accord. This was a difficult decision for Lucy, but one that she felt was necessary to support labour rights in Bangladesh, as a specific window to apply certain pressures appeared. The landscape for these stakeholders is ever-shifting.

7.2.3 The paradox of digital technologies for labour rights organisation-based stakeholders

Labour rights organisation-based stakeholders viewed digital technologies as both helping and hurting efforts. Outside of Bangladesh, for example, social media tools were embedded into public campaigning, and digital technologies were used as a means of communicating with colleagues across geographic locations. Boomerang calls for support, for example, were generally received via email. These stakeholders were sceptical on the extent to which social media tools aided their efforts. They viewed them as complementing strategies already in place, as another front, but would never rely on them alone to secure aims. Emma (Org_03) for example, told me how she viewed social media as a space to share offline efforts. In her experience, the success of offline efforts can be attributed to online campaigns. Although she found this frustrating, she felt it was important for online and offline efforts to work in concert with one another; she felt that stakeholders engaged in offline efforts should turn to online tools for support and that online pressure could never replace offline efforts. Lucy (Org_11) shared a similar view and questioned the impact of online efforts, and how such impacts might be measured. Social media was not only used a tool for public engagement, but also for organisers to share information.

Inside Bangladesh, social media tools supported stakeholder-stakeholder communications. Garment workers, for example, would use Facebook Messenger to share images with their worker representatives—images they had taken on their phones of products they were stitching, along with brand labels. Farzi (Org_04) shared with me how her organisation was interested in training workers on social media but stressed that this was not the main priority. While digital technologies such as social media tools offered potential to support transparency, they were not seen as secure channels. Monitoring stakeholder movement was a tactic of intimidation. Farzi and Kamal told me they lived in fear every day of the Bangladeshi government. They believed they were being followed at all times, and that the government was monitoring their computers and mobile devices. Digital technologies played a paradoxical role for these stakeholders, as channels of both support and intimidation.

7.3 Industry-based stakeholders

Like their movement colleagues, industry-based interviewees engaged in efforts related to Bangladesh, irrespective of their own geographic location. These stakeholders were particularly interested in building and securing strategic partnerships with stakeholders across the movement, and mainly prioritised efforts linked to reputation management, in terms of locating and responding to issues, managing relationships, and supporting contextual understandings related to processes of fashion and apparel production and consumption. Fashion and digital technologies were seen as tools which both helped and hindered efforts in various ways.

7.3.1 Fashioning security: economic development and worker safety

In the wake of the collapse, industry-based interviewees were concerned with worker safety and reputation management. For Mizan (Ind_06), a senior director at an industry association, the Rana Plaza collapse was not emblematic of garment manufacturing in the country. It was thanks to the RMG sector, he told me, that Bangladesh gained strides in economic development. Citing manufacturing sectors in China, Taiwan and South Korea, as examples, Mizan was optimistic. Despite the

collapse, he felt confident market forces would guarantee a bright future for Bangladesh's economy. It would just take time, he told me. Foysol (Ind_07), a senior executive at a separate industry association, echoed Mizan's sentiments. Bangladesh, he stressed, remained open for business. He felt confident that the country's RMG sector would meet the demands of foreign stakeholders and deliver on promises to secure worker safety. Financial restraints, however, were impacting domestic industry stakeholder's ability to respond to demands. Time and patience were necessary, he argued. Syed (Ind_8), an industry association project manager, also felt the economic future of Bangladesh was bright, so long as the RMG sector understood, and could respond to, the wants and needs of its main clients—foreign brands and retailers. Syed was excited at strides the sector had made to improve environmental challenges and was keen on promoting 'clean factories'. For Shakil (Ind_09), an industry expert working as a consultant with brands and their suppliers in Bangladesh, as well as with the Accord, there were limitations on what foreign stakeholders could achieve in Bangladesh:

The Accord was able to bring in a lot of foreign experts on the technical side of the problem, which was finding out the structural integrity the fire safety issues. They were able to bring in a lot of foreign expertise on that. But on the other side, health and safety committees and the sort of empowering or training the local factory workers, that's something that is, cannot, I mean, I don't think can be easily achieved through foreign expertise.

Shakil viewed worker empowerment as the most meaningful solution toward preventing labour rights violations and keeping workers safe, and believed that such initiatives as the Accord and the Alliance could not bring sufficient changes to Bangladesh's RMG sector with respect to worker safety; foreign expertise could only help with 'the technical side of the problem'. For these stakeholders, the collapse challenged the industry in unique ways, with the role of foreign stakeholders seen as playing an important, albeit limited, role in securing economic development and worker safety.

7.3.2 Being 'seen': The importance of strategic partnerships

Industry-based stakeholders discussed how they felt companies were under increased pressure—local and global organisations, workers and even from other companies—

to be seen as doing *something*, even when the potential for effective actions was limited. Nick (Ind_01), for example, an experienced senior manager at a high street retailer, shared with me the pressures he and other industry-based stakeholders were under to be ‘seen’ as engaged when responding to issues in factories: “You're there, and you have a dialogue, and that's all, but you know it's very much also just about showing that you're out there.” Mike (Ind_02) echoed this sentiment, sharing that in some cases it was important for corporate strategies to be *seen as effective*, even when they weren't. Take, for example, worker hotlines. Despite collecting and documenting grievances from workers, management will only respond to certain calls. Mike told me that this was because it is important for workers to feel that they are being heard. In this case, a company may strategically respond to select grievances, reinforcing a perception that workers and management are collaborating in partnership together, managing reputation amongst workers. The amount of time and resources that could be applied to resolve worker grievances was limited, he told me, especially when grievances were deemed unrelated to the brand, such as when a worker raises a personal grievance.

Industry-based stakeholders understood Western consumer demand for fashion and apparel, and specifically fast-fashion, as one of the root causes of labour rights violations in Bangladesh. Jenny (Ind_05), the senior communications specialist working at a European-based industry-based RFA movement organisation I introduced during the introduction of this chapter, felt that a central challenge for fast-fashion systems of production, was its inability to support relationship building between industry stakeholders:

So, there are all these prejudices and to a large extent truths about the fashion industry. You know, the fast-fashion being callous about switching suppliers, whenever it suits, whenever it's cheapest, going for the cheap supplier, moving countries, you know, all of that. [...] It needs to change. It's not a sustainable way of doing business with garment factories, and it puts pressure almost, you can almost say, directly pressures the factory managers to mistreat their workers. It may be a bit of a simplification because they're not saints either, but there's no incentive for if that's what happens, say for example, a brand changes suppliers every season, there's no incentive for whichever supplier to change, to improve. There's no business reason for them to improve.

Factories needed incentives, Jenny argued, to support worker rights. For certain industry-based interviewees, the business case for labour rights led back to consumer behaviour; Western consumers were seen as directly impacting the corporate bottom-line. Shakil (Ind-09), for example, an industry-based consultant working with stakeholders in Bangladesh, believed that Western consumers could play a strategic role in determining the conditions products were made in:

I have been working in the industry long enough that the kind of progress I am seeing [in Bangladesh, in the factories] is not as fast as I would have liked. So I put a lot of trust in the consumer, people who are going to stores to buy products. If they are able to make conscious decisions and say no to certain brands or certain products just on the grounds of knowing that the brand is not doing a good job in terms of its foreign supply chain. I think that can make a lot of change.

Shakil was frustrated at the state of labour rights for garment workers in Bangladesh and frustrated at failing to witness what he felt was enough change from stakeholders working within the country; Western consumers could make the difference. Certain industry-based interviewees also perceived campaigning work of other movement stakeholders, as helpful for challenging companies to reconsider corporate policies—policy changes which RFA movement industry-based stakeholders were likely already calling for. Mike (Ind_02) for example, explained how public campaigns apply pressure on issues in such a way that enables him to leverage internal support.

We're also the safety department, so we deal with consumer safety, so we deal with consumer groups and we deal with NGOs and advocacy groups and supply chain safety is also a part of our, and environment and things, so we do all those many things and the way I guess we look at is that, um, if you look at in terms of internal leverage, your importance of the department also reflects what the consumer concerns are, so campaigning, and these other activities, largely I never view as negative.

Although Mike felt that public pressure translated to internal leverage, he shared a similar view to Jenny (Ind_05) and Shakil (Ind_09), stressing the importance of establishing long-term partnerships with industry stakeholders was essential to support workers. With lobbying efforts seemingly welcomed by RFA movement industry-based stakeholders, they stressed the importance of contextual understandings.

Industry-based interviewees working at companies felt a sense of frustration when they felt employer was misunderstood and, as a result, misrepresented across the RFA movement. According to Per (Ind_03), a senior executive at a high street retailer, the industry provided Bangladesh with jobs, played a role at training workers. Economic development in Bangladesh was good for business, and vice versa, he told me. In his workplace capacity, Per partnered with local and international organisations on poverty reduction projects because he felt that doing so made good business sense for the sector. He welcomed efforts that sought increased transparency, but felt that all retailers and brands producing in Bangladesh should be held to the same standards, and that it was problematic for stakeholders to target certain brands and not others because he viewed the nature of manufacturing in Bangladesh as such that all companies should be held to the same account. He felt his company had nothing to hide, but also believed that contextual nuance was necessary to understand how his employer did business in Bangladesh.

When I'm dealing with the NGOs, I'm saying look well it's positive—well, of course, we get frustrated if they misrepresent what's happened—if they are simply campaigning and it's a relevant issue for us and the industry and their naming us and we're a part of that, it generally is good for us, internally. Because we're really saying, these are issues of the day, Board you need to look at them, here are the campaigns that are running, and it strengthens our position as a department as we negotiate the space with our Board about the things that need to get done.

'Issues of the day' were seen as important to the bottom-line, and industry-based stakeholders were under pressure to deliver—pressure from their Boards, pressure from industry-based colleagues, pressure from local and global organisations, pressure from workers, and pressure from consumers.

Even when industry-based stakeholders understood their business as operating outside of fast-fashion, they felt impacted by perceptions of fast-fashion models of production. Mike (Ind_02) believed this was due to misunderstandings related to business models:

Largely people are ignorant, or the general consumer would be, and certainly, the journalists are often ignorant, they can't make the distinction between business models and approaches in company practices, so you inevitably get

swept up and caught within that kind of, the expectation of fashion, you know. [...] well that is not how we are as a company [...] there are areas which overlap of course, but largely it's a different business, and it's not that business.

Mike viewed fashion and apparel as more than conceptually distinct, each operating through different models of operation. Misconceptions between fashion and apparel meant misconceptions of industry practices. Such misconceptions could lead consumers to purchase alternative products.

However, industry stakeholders felt it was problematic when campaigns promoted alternative fashion products as superior; they questioned the provenance of alternative fashion products pitched to consumers as responsible, challenging the impact fashion-related efforts can play in transforming labour rights. Jenny (Ind_05), for example:

What I find problematic is that there isn't really a good alternative for the bulk of consumers. There are consumers who are willing to spend time and money on figuring out what kind of is fairer fashion but there is no real fair fashion, or what's there is marginal, and even then, there are usually issues. So it's difficult to take, to sort of decide, what to do, and there is a small group of consumers who have taken that decision and who are doing the research and who are trying to only buy, you know, according to the criteria that they managed to come up with but it's not easy there are no, there is no, 100% fair type mark that is credible at this point in time. And so, these campaigns, yes, they are helpful, but they are also, I mean we should be careful not to give consumers the feeling that oh god it's all terrible but there is nothing we can do.

Jenny believed truly 'fair fashion' was a myth, that companies should be held to the same account, and that campaigns promoting alternative fashion products risked overwhelming consumers, who may conclude 'there is nothing we can do'.

7.4 Other-related stakeholders

In a conceptual category comprised of artists, writers, educators, academics, as well as corporate and government advisors, other-related interviewees and informants engaged with the RFA movement in varying degrees, through efforts which spanned across different geographic locations. Like their fellow movement colleagues, these stakeholders also leveraged the collapse as a means of drawing attention to wider

issues related to social justice. Lynn (OtherInfo_01), for example, an experienced project manager based in Dhaka, shared with me how the collapse created opportunities for her employer to challenge the Government of Bangladesh on its labour laws; Rana Plaza held a spotlight over garment making, which in turn shed light over other labour-intensive industries operating across the country, such as fishing and construction. Lynn was interested in initiatives which supported labour rights across Bangladesh and fashion and apparel manufacturing in the wake of Rana Plaza was an entry point into broader issues.²²

7.4.1 Another front: Fashioning conversations to support social change

Fashion was used by other-related stakeholders in ways which were similar to those of both fashion-based stakeholders and labour rights organisation-based stakeholders: as a mechanism for attraction. Stephanie (Other_03), a UK-based writer and activist, viewed fashion as a model, yet underutilised, commodity which activists could use to capture attention; through fashion, there was an opportunity to connect with citizens on issues related to labour rights:

Basically there was just like a big space where the fashion industry was, and I just kind of felt, I still feel, the Left, as it were, should be sort of looking at all different issues, not just the sorts of traditional ones, like war and austerity, but that the fashion industry is actually something important to engage with.

For Stephanie, fashion systems of consumption and production were directly responsible for labour rights grievances in Bangladesh and elsewhere. She felt people and planet were exploited in fashion supply chains at the hands of corporate greed and misconduct, which she viewed as ultimately driven by profit margins. Joseph (Other_06) felt that fashion was a helpful device for storytelling. He was interested in helping citizens engage with complicated societal issues, without overwhelming them, and felt that fashion was a point of entry into difficult conversations. Along with food and electronics, he viewed fashion as a “charismatic megafauna” of

²² In the wake of the collapse, Bangladesh made significant changes to its labour laws, increasing the legal minimum wage and allowing workers their right to organise. There are limitations to these changes, such as requiring a minimum of 30% employees support before forming a union, as well as fear and intimidation tactics recorded by labour rights observers in the country (Rahman and Jabin, 2017).

consumer products, “like polar bears and giraffes and lions and things like that. [...] To me it's [fashion] no more or less important than any other kind of commodity, it's just something that has taken off”. For Joseph, fashion was interesting as a tool to attract an audience. For Julia, (Other_04), a UK-based educator and activist, the concept of fashion held importance for its ability to connect; Julia felt that the materiality of clothing was universal: “Fashion touches all of us, but not necessarily in the same way.” Like Stephanie and Joseph, Julia engaged in efforts which drew connections between patterns of consumption and systems of production:

In some way or another, our relationship with clothes has a direct impact on production. [...] We wouldn't have the production methods that we have if we didn't have the consumption patterns that we have. The two are absolutely, completely intertwined. You wouldn't have mass amounts of factories that we have if we didn't have a consumption model that we have that is based on changing our clothes really frequently. And therefore, you know as soon as you start to bring in the buying practices which impact workers' rights, the impact of speed and time and flexibility and so on, directly impact workers' rights, there's no separation of them. But that doesn't mean that fashion is wrong, or bad.

Julia points to the pace of consumption as contributing to workplace grievances, yet makes a point to detach the concept of fashion from the equation. The challenge for Julia was to highlight the role of fashion as a material commodity, without compromising fashion itself. Although certain stakeholders in this conceptual category flagged fast-fashion patterns of consumption as hindering labour rights, some actively worked to problematize single-story narratives. This quote from Joseph demonstrates an awareness of the dangers of reinforcing binary understandings:

There are certain dynamics in this work that are really problematic. And one of which is that the consumer is almost always Western, and the producer is always in underdeveloped, or so-called Third World country, or what have you. So, there is a certain kind of North/South, Northern consumer, Southern producer dynamic. And also there is a sense sometimes that the portrayal of factory workers, or farmers, or whatever, are not that rich or nuanced, in the sense that they are... Well, you know, a similar story is told left, right and centre about how they have ended up in this situation and what their options are. And often it's a very highly gendered story as well. I don't know what the actual figures might be, but most of the women documented as working under these environments are women, especially in fashion and electronics in

particular. [...] It's problematic. It's very unusual to find any work that's been done with Southern producers and Northern producers, or even South to South or North to North commodity chains. [...] And so, this whole single-story, I mean it's problematic. Yes. I think it is problematic. I would say that [my project] is supposed to examine this genre of work and hopefully shows that this is a problematic issue, but also that there are nuances within this work as well. So, there isn't necessarily a single-story.

Highlighting nuance was important for Joseph, in efforts which attempted to challenge understandings which framed workers and consumers as homogenous groups, and stories which positioned Western consumers as holding power over Southern producers. That the single-story was typically gendered was an important consideration. Despite understanding aspects of his work as being 'really problematic', however, Joseph continues to engage in efforts related to fashion and social justice, using fashion as a hook to drive 'conversations'—conversations he hopes move frameworks beyond single-story narratives.

7.4.2 Digital technology to capture conversations

Stakeholders across this group spoke of digital technologies as playing an important role in their efforts, but also understood them as limiting in certain contexts. In particular, they viewed social media tools and the internet as significant for helping stakeholders network, organise, and share information and resources. Thus, like their movement colleagues, other-related stakeholders utilised digital technologies alongside their offline efforts. Social media tools, in particular, were flagged as potentially helpful, yet limited in specific ways. Delwar (Other_01) and Brian (Other_02), for example, both UK-based artists and activists, utilised social media tools as a means to project their efforts to diverse audiences. They felt that some digital tools were better than others and that it was important for stakeholders working within the movement to be cognisant of issues such as accessibility. For both Delwar and Brian, it was as important for garment workers to access their work as it was for Western consumers to see it. For this reason, they consciously chose to utilise certain tools over others; they wanted to make sure that the technologies they did use were accessible for users who may not have access to high-speed internet, for example. In addition, they felt there should be no additional barriers to accessing content, and avoided using digital tools which would require users to download

programmes to view content, and also avoided the use of paywalls, for example. Ease of access was essential for them—it should be as easy for a garment worker to access content on a mobile device as it should be for a Western consumer to access content while walking the high street. They wanted to tell nuanced stories and hoped their audience would engage with their projects and determine for themselves how best to take action.

For Joseph (Other_06), a UK-based researcher, educator and organiser I introduced in the introduction of this chapter, digital technologies were potentially interesting as a means to create and support conversations. The dialogue was essential for Joseph, and it was important for him that his efforts were structured in a way that supported difficult conversations. Using digital technologies, he was able to create a space which collated and presented various perspectives:

What I don't do and what [the work] doesn't do is be confrontational. The most important thing about [the work] is that it's about the conversation. That's the most important thing. [...] We're trying to capture the conversation. [...] It's supposed to be that sense of capturing, reworking and inviting [participants] into these kinds of conversations so that they can work out what they think about stuff without us telling them.

Like Delwar and Brian, Joseph wanted to ‘capture the conversation’ so that audiences could determine for themselves what to think on issues related to global commodity chains. He was interested in social media tools for creating opportunities for conversation, but felt that the potential of social media to be used as a tool for engagement did not always materialise, and he found that online content was more useful in stimulating offline conversations:

We used Facebook commenting assuming that if there was a conversation it would be captured on Facebook, and that's been a complete failure. Nothing has happened there in terms of the conversation carrying on online. The most effective way it has carried offline, is through contact with real people [...] Online, from my experience, doesn't work on its own.

The idea that social media tools are insufficient on their own at supporting meaningful engagement echoes views from stakeholders working across other conceptual categories, who also felt that online efforts were effective only when working ‘in conversation’ with offline strategies; social media was just another

resource. While digital technologies were seen as capable of both helping and hurting stakeholder efforts, stakeholders in this conceptual category understood ‘fashion’ in similar terms.

Through their efforts, other-related stakeholders sought to draw connections between patterns of consumption and systems of production. Like their movement colleagues, they felt that systems of fast-fashion consumption and production hindered garment worker rights in Bangladesh. They were concerned, however, with single-story narratives linked to efforts which highlight such connections. These stakeholders embraced, albeit with scepticism, fashion and digital technologies as means to enhance their efforts; they harnessed digital technologies and fashion as tools to attract new audiences, and to capture and facilitate conversations related to wider systemic challenges cross the global fashion and apparel industry.

7.5 Conclusion

Moving behind the (online) scene of the FashRev website, this chapter examines the transnational efforts of the wider RFA movement through qualitative interviews with 42 stakeholders working across four distinct conceptual categories: fashion-based stakeholders, labour rights organisation-based stakeholders, industry-based stakeholders, and other-related stakeholders. By separating research participants into separate, albeit imperfect, groupings, differences and similarities emerge (Swedberg, 2018). Interviews revealed that in the wake of the Rana Plaza disaster, RFA movement stakeholders, irrespective of movement category, were involved in similar efforts, all working to reform practices and behaviours by leveraging fashion, digital technologies, and strategic partnerships as tools of attraction and engagement. Not only were the efforts of RFA movement stakeholders similar in terms of tools for engagement, but all but some remained steadfast in their use of conventional practices, applying interventions which focused on the not-so-hidden consequences of fast-fashion production.

The FashRev website had pitched an alternative. Fashion, it claimed, was a unique strategy for community engagement. Yet, interviews with RFA movement stakeholders reveal that fashion-related efforts are not exclusive to FashRev, nor are

they restricted only to fashion-based stakeholders. Stakeholders within each grouping leveraged fashion as a resource, understanding it as a mechanism to widen engagement on issues; interviewees and informants across all RFA movement categories engaged in fashion-related efforts, albeit with different aims. Fashion was used by labour rights organisation-based stakeholders to widen the landscape, by industry-stakeholders to entice consumer engagement with the market, and by other-related stakeholders as a mechanism to hold space for contemplation on broader issues related to structural inequalities. Fashion was not the only device used as a tool of attraction: digital technologies were also employed by stakeholders across all categories, although interviewees understood these tools as limited. Strategic partnerships were employed as a key strategy, seen as essential to accomplish stakeholder aims. These were not static, however, as interviewees and informants negotiated and renegotiated their relationships based on their short- and long-term needs.

Interviewees and informants understood knowledge exchange as a central pathway toward achieving behavioural reform. While some targeted consumers and industry practitioners, others focused on organisations and governments. Stakeholders operationalised their efforts through an *information provision reform pathway*, a pathway which understands knowledge exchange as *a theory of change*. The majority of RFA movement interviewees and informants sought to reform practices and behaviour through either voluntary and/or legislative means, focusing on consumption, industry behaviour, organisational mandates and government policies. Most efforts were designed to enhance connectivity, share information and resources, and raise awareness on specific movement causes in relation to supply chain logistics. Not all RFA movement stakeholders followed convention, however. Some interviewees and informants engaged with the reform pathway in ways which aimed to disrupt the logic of capitalism and uproot binary understandings related to consumers and workers, as well as the relationship between them.

Chapter 8 ‘It's about conversation’: Fashioning change through information provision

Efforts to support labour rights from transnational stakeholders have been historically classed in terms of ‘top-down’ or ‘bottom-up’ frameworks. Across the global fashion and apparel industry, the actions of transnational stakeholders aiming to support local stakeholder interests are set in motion through a conventional ‘boomerang’ pattern (Seidman, 2007), a strategy with origins in the international human rights movement (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). In theory, local stakeholders are meant to set the agenda items for their transnational allies, as they turn to them for support related to specific issues. A closer look at efforts of RFA movement stakeholders in the wake of the Rana Plaza disaster, however, indicates that, in practice, local stakeholder voices are not necessarily prioritised by transnational actors. Within the RFA movement, interviewees and informants supported multilateral knowledge exchange as a theory of change. This adds a new dimension: not ‘top-down’ or ‘bottom-up’ initiatives, but multilateral movements—movements which complicate boomerang patterns. Like the fashion and apparel products they interrogate, the efforts of RFA movement stakeholders operate within the global culture industry (Crewe, 2018; Lash and Lury, 2007; McRobbie, 2016). In this chapter, I examine RFA movement efforts to show how interviewees and informants operationalised knowledge exchange in various forms, as they understand multilateral information provision as a primary pathway toward securing worker safety in the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse.

Conventional transnational efforts aimed at supporting labour rights suggest Western consumers hold power to dictate conditions of work and life for garment workers. This framing has been critiqued for reinforcing stereotypes and ultimately reproducing structural inequalities (Brooks, 2007; Kabeer, 2000; Seidman, 2007). Not only are such efforts deemed problematic for branding workers as vulnerable, in need of Western saving, they also imply that Western consumers are themselves a homogenous group (Pham, 2017). Both workers and consumers are framed in binary terms. The RFA movement stakeholders I spoke with add nuance to such critical understandings. RFA movement stakeholders operationalise their efforts through an

information provision reform pathway—a pathway for social change which seeks to foster conversations as a means toward achieving a particular aim related to altering behaviour. From changing patterns of consumption to signing a petition and lobbying companies, to protesting brands on the high street, or calling on governments to enforce regulations. In the information provision reform pathway, knowledge is constantly sought after and exchanged, with stakeholders actively negotiating how they should behave (act or respond) based on information they have access to at any given time, as a result of information shared through conversation.

Post-Rana Plaza, interviewees and informants mainly responded to the collapse through efforts which pursued industry reform through mainly voluntary and legislative means. While voluntary processes sought improved business transparency, monitoring and evaluation, legislative approaches sought a strengthening of legal frameworks, law enforcement and good governance. Despite working across the RFA movement in mostly distinct categories, stakeholders engaged in similar efforts, leveraging fashion, digital technologies and opportunities for strategic partnerships to advance their claims. Despite the use of such tools, efforts were not shown to be much different than past efforts: perceptions of consumers and workers remained mostly tied to the linear rhythm of supply chain logistics, set through the logic of capitalism. Some stakeholder efforts stood apart from those of their movement colleagues, however, by developing projects and initiatives where fostering conversation *was itself the main aim*. These RFA movement stakeholders designed and engaged in efforts which disrupted conventional approaches aimed at supporting labour rights.

8.1 Information provision: Knowledge exchange and transparency

RFA movement stakeholder interviewees and informants shared a common assumption: that improved access to information—better ‘knowing’—would help stakeholders change certain practices and behaviours, which were understood as hurting efforts to improve worker rights in Bangladesh. If only they ‘knew’ what the story really was, they would behave differently. Here, there is an assumption that a true version of a story exists, and that access to information related to that true

version would inevitably support workers. Yet stakeholders understood that the context surrounding issues would be interpreted in different ways and that this was part of the challenge in seeking out and in sharing information. Despite understanding the circumstances which surrounded the collapse in slightly different ways, each shared an overarching goal of reforming stakeholder behaviour through knowledge exchange, building, pursuing, and supporting efforts related to information sharing. Efforts operated within an information provision reform pathway, under a baseline assumption that knowledge is a means to drive social change.

Irrespective of RFA movement category, stakeholders assumed that by improving education and access to certain types of information, as well as by increasing awareness on specific aspects of the nature of fashion and apparel production, individuals would (1) alter their own behaviour in support of garment worker safety and (2) work to convince others to alter their behaviour as well. Under the information provision reform pathway, stakeholders understand knowledge as a powerful resource, building, brokering and buying content related to social and environmental challenges facing the industry. Interviewees and informants also sourced information for their own sake, feeling that if they themselves were better informed, they would have a better chance of supporting workers. The types of information stakeholders were drawn to throughout the information provision reform pathway differed depending on the issue they prioritised. Issue prioritization was a central tension across the RFA movement.

Efforts within the information provision reform pathway were not static; how a stakeholder engaged in strategies across the pathway depended on certain factors, such as education and background experience, access to information and personal and practical limitations related to time and money. While some stakeholders interrogated their own awareness and understanding of issues, they remained bound by these restraints. This included any perceived lack of understanding related to context, with respect to circumstantial nuance or complexity. If stakeholders were only more aware of the true ‘social life’ surrounding fashion and apparel production, if they were better informed on related issues, they would alter their practices and

behaviour. Stakeholders employed various types of efforts within the information provision reform pathway, all aimed at improving knowledge related to specific issues; ‘knowing’ through education and training, as well as knowledge exchange and resource sharing was essential to RFA movement stakeholder efforts. The aims supported behaviour reform through either voluntary or legal means. With respect to voluntary reform, efforts sought to reform the behaviour of stakeholders across the supply chain, including Western consumers and Bangladeshi garment workers. With regards to legislative reform, efforts targeted local, foreign and supranational institutions.

8.1.1 ‘Knowing’ how to support change

Fashion, digital technologies and the formation of strategic partnerships were three mechanisms used to support knowledge exchange aimed at reforming stakeholder behaviour. The information provision reform pathway was also an avenue for stakeholders to showcase their own credibility, and interviewees and informants viewed themselves as both teacher and learner. The exact nature of what type of learning should take place, including educational content, varied from stakeholder to stakeholder. Stakeholders justified why they perceived themselves as holding the authority to engage with specific efforts across the RFA movement by citing education credentials, referencing knowledge of theorists and/or academic readings, explaining what they had learned from various experiences, and sharing how they planned to continue learning, for example. The information provision reform pathway was also a space to refute the credibility of other stakeholders working across the global fashion and apparel industry, both inside and outside of Bangladesh.

The ways in which stakeholders engaged with the pathway depended on certain factors, such as their education and background experience, their familiarity with a certain context, but also their ability to access information, their financial circumstances, and their emotional capacity. In Bangladesh, RFA movement interviewees and informants stressed historical, cultural and political factors as impacting how stakeholders in the country could work toward improving labour rights, as well as citing financial pressures. Context was perceived as something that

was missing from foreign stakeholder understandings. Outside of Bangladesh, industry-based stakeholders echoed these concerns, expressing frustration at what they perceived to be a context deficit. Labour rights-organisation related stakeholders emphasised their desire to work and act only in response to information provided to them by workers, in connection with worker organisations in Bangladesh. Interviewees and informants, however, shared with me that this is not always possible. For the most part, stakeholders appeared flexible in their approach—shifting gears as needed, and eager to work with their movement colleagues, across stakeholder categories, in order to better support labour rights.

Fashion-based stakeholders appeared particularly flexible in the strategies they adopted. These stakeholders claimed that they were not only open to partnership and dialogue but that they were interested in challenging their own understandings related to the various issues they worked on. Sophia (Fash_08), for example, spoke candidly about how she questioned her ability to support garment workers, citing a lack of knowledge and experience with the subject. Flagging her own limitations, she expressed a desire to learn from other RFA movement stakeholders. Kristen (Fash_09), Alice (Fash_10) and Nikki (Fash_11) also felt it was important to learn from the experiences of others, as they engaged in partnerships with other RFA movement stakeholders to share their knowledge and expertise. Such expressions of reflection marked a central distinction between them and their movement colleagues. Fashion-based stakeholders shared a willingness to reflect on their experience and learn from the experiences of others. Flexible or not, whether based inside or outside of Bangladesh, RFA movement stakeholders called for both voluntary and legislative reform. Some pursued mainly efforts supporting voluntary reform, while others felt behaviour reform through legal measures would best support workers. Both called on consumers, industry, government and workers themselves, to reform their practices and behaviour.

Outside of Bangladesh, RFA movement stakeholders mainly engaged in a blended approach to behaviour reform, pursuing efforts which targeted both streams. When they did engage in strategies which called for improved legislation, law enforcement and good governance, they mainly called on foreign and supranational government

bodies to reform behaviour, rather than engaging with the Bangladesh government, or local institutions. Not all initiatives targeting worker reform in Bangladesh were concerned with education related to labour rights, however. Mark (Fash_02) and Elizabeth (Fash_04) hoped to upskill workers in their own fashion and apparel product supply chains. Elizabeth partnered with companies to provide workers with training that would lead to industry-sponsored certifications. Such initiatives targeted workers in ways which did not inform them of their rights but rather aimed to improve their skillset in order to better their chances of securing higher paid work.

8.1.2 Transparency

Transparency was highlighted by stakeholders across all categories. However, it featured as important for different reasons. For industry-based interviewees and informants, transparency was important to showcase ‘good news’ stories from within the country. The Rana Plaza building collapse had tarnished Bangladesh’s reputation, and improved transparency was seen as a chance to turn things around. For these stakeholders, monitoring and evaluation schemes provided business opportunities, as companies could showcase the various social and environmental policies and procedures they had in place to support people and planet. Labour rights organisation-based stakeholders, on the other hand, sought transparency as a means of monitoring labour-rights grievances. Bangladesh-based labour rights organisation-based stakeholders, for example, worked to showcase irresponsible practices and behaviour taking place across the sector. Fashion-based and other-related stakeholders, on the other hand, sought transparency in order to locate positive and negative stories.

In Bangladesh, certain RFA movement stakeholders worried about reputation management in the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse. These stakeholders stressed economic development as crucial for workers, citing much-needed jobs, but also the overall growth of the country as depending on fashion and apparel manufacturing. Bangladesh, they told me, remained open for business, and they saw a strong business case for responsible and apparel production within the country. Improved transparency for increased access to information relating to industry practices and behaviour was seen as central toward supporting the business case for responsible

fashion and apparel in the country. For market forces to shift, financial support was required; improving infrastructure to meet the demands of foreign stakeholders would take time and money. Industry-based interviewees and informants invited transparency, believing that the market would adjust if there was strong enough demand for change. Standing in the way of responsible fashion and apparel production in Bangladesh, they told me, was resource scarcity relating to knowledge, access to information, financial support and time. They called for transparency not only in relation to supply chain optics but also with respect to contextual understandings on the history of garment making in Bangladesh. Not all RFA movement stakeholders in Bangladesh held faith that market forces alone could support workers. These stakeholders shared the concerns of their movement colleagues but engaged in efforts that viewed behaviour reform through legislative means as essential to improving worker rights within the country.

RFA movement stakeholders held conflicting views on how to prioritise efforts within the information provision reform pathway. FashRev's pro-fashion activist website pulled creativity, environment, worker rights and economic justice together under one global campaign umbrella; rather than focus on a particular aspect of fashion (material, symbolic, or commercial, for example), the website mixed multiple issues together. Issues were blended, despite leveraging episodic framing (event-specific) to rally public and industry engagement and support: the Rana Plaza building collapse. Interviews with RFA movement stakeholders revealed both fashion-based stakeholders and industry-based stakeholders engaged in efforts which drew connections between social and environmental factors.

8.2 Key tensions under legislative and voluntary approaches to behaviour reform

Post-Rana Plaza, issue prioritisation created tension across the movement. In Bangladesh, interviewees and informants stressed a need for a sustained and balanced noise: just the right amount of attention to maintain pressure for change without compromising jobs and disrupting the sector's contribution to the country's economic development. Focusing on strictly labour rights grievances, labour rights organisation-based stakeholders did not concern themselves with environmental

issued unless they related specifically to workplace health and safety. Further distinguishing fashion-based stakeholders from labour-rights organisation-based stakeholders was how they conceptualised the importance of fashion. While labour rights organisation-based stakeholders may have supported sartorial dissent, they did not emphasise their engagement with such efforts. Although they generally encouraged fashion-based stakeholder efforts, they worried these fell short of directly supporting workers. Emma, Lucy, and Suzie shared with me their apprehension as to whether the efforts of fashion-based stakeholders were effective, as they felt there was no specific ‘ask’. Put another way, they questioned whether certain fashion-based efforts had any ‘teeth’. Andrew, Jude, Emma, Lucy, and Suzie focused mainly on specific worker grievances, grievances that reached their desks from workers via organisations in Bangladesh in a classic boomerang pattern. They preferred to prioritise efforts on the specific grievances that came to them through partner organisations in Bangladesh. Issue prioritisation remained a challenge for labour rights stakeholders, however, as boomerang requests were not always prioritised. Tensions within the movement regarding issues prioritisation relate to a series of binary categorisations: consumer/worker issue framing and social/environmental divides.

While some RFA movement interviewees and informants both inside and outside of Bangladesh called mainly for behaviour reform through voluntary measures, others called for a strengthening of legal frameworks. Where RFA movement stakeholders pursued legal reform, they engaged in efforts that drew attention to specific industry-based grievances, such as financial compensation, supporting the rule of law with respect to workers’ right to organise, and ratifying the country’s labour laws to meet international standards. Across the information provision reform pathway, tensions within the movement were visible. When Rana Plaza collapsed, boomerang calls for support from workers through media coverage and through worker associations travelled the globe. Calls for support through conventional boomerang patterns were at times disrupted by tensions within the RFA movement, a competitive, multi-mediated landscape. Tension strained transnational solidarity across the movement, as efforts to support calls for intervention, received through the boomerang pattern

were seen by some by some interviewees and informants as disruptive, deprioritising worker interests.

8.2.1 Consumer/worker binary

While some interviewees drew direct connections between the actions of Western consumers and the labour rights of Bangladeshi garment workers, others problematized such characterisations as singular, flat and lacking nuance. The latter called for a dismantling of binary understandings between workers and consumers. Joseph (Other_06), for example, was uncomfortable with portrayals of workers as victims. He engaged in efforts that challenged such framing. For Emma (Org_03), on the other hand, consumption was not particularly important to efforts; she worried that by focusing too heavily on the consumer, the role of the individual would be stressed in ways that supported neo-liberal frameworks that she viewed as reinforcing asymmetrical power relations. These stakeholders shared a concern that efforts focused on consumption alone would inevitably fail to address structural barriers impacting workers and their lives.

When factory work is understood as leading to a form of liberation through economic freedom, garment worker empowerment is framed as something that depends on consumer support. The empowerment of women was seen as something which could be achieved through economic freedom, which, for some stakeholders, was connected to factory work. Not unlike the FashRev campaign and fashion-based activists, labour rights organisation-based interviewees targeted consumers to raise their voice. The consumer was presented as holding the power to call for better working conditions; the voice of the consumer was stressed as a powerful tool to support the voice of the worker. Here, a challenge to boycott/buycott strategies of political consumerism emerges: consumers are asked to continue purchasing from brands associated with labour rights violations, but to do so while simultaneously applying pressure on brands to support workers.

Shaming tactics are common in conventional transnational labour rights efforts. The public-facing strategies of labour rights organisation-based stakeholders target the misconduct of specific industry stakeholders only when private negotiations fell

short. Post-Rana Plaza, public-shaming tactics were employed by labour rights organisation-based stakeholders to call on consumers to lobby some brands to sign onto the Accord, as well as to pay compensation to victims of the disaster. Brands are pressured to engage in global partnerships aimed at protecting workers when their brand reputation is damaged, challenged by consumers to alter their behaviour. The Accord had been positioned as the “European” agreement, and the Alliance as the “North American” arrangement—a strategy Lucy (Org_11) told me had been created by labour rights organisation-stakeholders to isolate and target specific brands. Yet the Accord and Alliance, according to industry-based stakeholders, would be unable to support worker rights in meaningful ways.

8.2.2 Social/environmental divide

Fashion-based stakeholders collapsed social and environmental issues together in their efforts, marking a clear distinction between their work within the movement, and the work of their movement colleagues. For fashion-based interviewees, in order for fashion and apparel products to be responsible, issues related to the environment and to worker rights could not be separated. Through this lens, the dichotomy between social and environmental issues was challenged as they became pulled together under one umbrella. For these stakeholders, initiatives which prioritised one theme ahead of another were not sufficiently engaging with the issues.

One example where social and environmental challenges collide is seen through responsible fashion and apparel certification initiatives and related schemes. Fashion-based movement stakeholders supported voluntary behaviour reform efforts and called for more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of fashion and apparel product manufacturing. They also highlighted certain certifications and processes already in place as falling short of expectations. Eileen (Fash_03), for example, praised the labour rights components of the Fairtrade certification scheme while voicing frustration at the inadequate requirements of the program’s environmental standards. Workers and the environment, Eileen argued, should be prioritised in equal measure.

The ‘circular economy’ provides another example. While some RFA movement stakeholders looked to this approach to support environmental challenges, Kristen

(Fash_09) and Nikki (Fash_11), shared a concern that such efforts ignored worker voices, prioritising the environment ahead of labour rights. Nikki was particularly concerned as to whether conversations centring the environment, such as projects and initiatives aimed at supporting the circular economy, provided space for labour rights at all. Through her work, she was interested in discovering how environmental protection and workers could both be supported through systems thinking. Although fashion-based interviewees believed that initiatives framing sustainability in strictly environmental terms, without concern for worker safety, were contradictory in nature, worker safety was none the less viewed as tied to sustainability.

8.3 Tools of engagement

Stakeholders used various tools to attract attention to themselves and their efforts, including engaging in strategic partnerships, highlighting fashion as a means of sartorial dissent, and pursuing digital technologies. Interviewees and informants leveraged digital tools in various ways. From harnessing social media to improve networking capacities and organisational outreach to utilising web-based platforms to lobby industry stakeholders to reform their practices and behaviour, the digital was harnessed as a mechanism to support information provision. The majority of interviewees and informants, however, were critical about ways in which digital technologies worked with respect to influencing social change; research participants questioned the impact of online actions and viewed them as limiting. Social media tools, for example, were seen as potentially helpful, but only when used in tandem with offline actions. This was striking as the FashRev website emphasised the use of digital technologies as an essential feature in RFA movement efforts. Yet, even as FashRev engaged in digital strategies, the organisation maintained a strong offline presence. Although digital tools were employed across the movement, the draw of fashion and the use of strategic partnerships were central for engaging in conversations related to social and environmental issues—from labour rights to climate change, and structural inequality to global capitalism.

8.3.1 Fashion

Fashion-based and other-related interviewees understood fashion as both material and symbolic (Rocamora and Smelik, 2016), as a means to communicate identity and as a product for material consumption, marketed and sold through global systems of production. Using the draw of ‘fashion’, fashion-based and other-related interviewees called on consumers to reflect upon, how they engaged with practices of consumption; these stakeholders supported projects focused on alternative consumption, such as boycotts, as well as engaging with practices of making and mending their own clothing, or swapping their clothes, for example. For others, it was about conversations. Some interviewees and informants were interested in harnessing the energy and buzz that felt surrounded fashion, to engage in conversations that would ultimately help citizens to locate labour exploitation within everyday products, and challenge ultimately challenge global capitalist markets.

For the majority of interviewees, practices of production for Western fashion and apparel consumers were seen as a root cause of workplace grievances in Bangladesh. Worker safety was viewed as compromised due to the speed and nature of consumer behaviour as a result of demands for fast-fashion. Fast-fashion was branded as an ultimate culprit, creating a culture of insecurity on the side of production, placing unrealistic demands on factory owners to cut corners. Here, strategies of intervention targeted Western consumers to either curb or alter their consumption practices or to communicate with brands and retailers in various ways to as to apply pressure on them to improve their corporate practices and behaviour. Labour rights organisation-based, industry-based, and other-related interviewees and informants viewed fashion-based efforts as holding the potential to strengthen transnational solidarities for labour rights but worried that when such efforts focused primarily on the sartorial needs and wants of Western consumers, worker needs and wants were side-lined.

Fashion-based interviewees mainly engaged in efforts which called on consumers and industry stakeholders to reform certain practices and behaviours related to the speed of consumption and production. They were also connected to projects and initiatives which supported calls to strengthen legislation. While they did not explicitly endorse calls for boycotts, some supported alternative consumption, such

as boycotts, by calling attention to brand behaviour. Eileen pointed to the case of Benetton, a brand that became a key target of labour rights organisation-based stakeholders in the wake of the collapse. Benetton was producing in the Rana Plaza building, although it did not concede this fact immediately despite public pressure from campaigners (Avaaz, 2015). The company held back on providing compensation for victims until it had completed an independent review through PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) (Za, 2015). The final amount the company did contribute (1.1 million USD, double the amount recommended by PwC) fell significantly short of the amount campaigners were calling for (5 million USD) (The Clean Clothes Campaign, 2014; Za, 2015).

Fashion was a tool, an entry point, into conversations that showcased complexity, and which challenged the single-story narrative. Yet frameworks developed by Balsiger (2014a, 2014b) understand fashion and apparel, or clothing, in synonymous terms, without carving any distinction between efforts that stem from perceptions of fashion as something that is fundamentally distinct from fast-fashion and other types of apparel. Fashion-based and other-related stakeholder interviewees challenge this conceptualisation. For some, fashion was a gateway hook, for others, it was an essential form of communication in identity politics, a tool to signal values and transform culture.

Rana Plaza showcased a relationship between consumer and worker, illustrating the complex nature of fashion and apparel production schemes in Bangladesh. The FashRev project website used fashion to ask the non-so-simple question: who made my clothes? It was a question which resonated with Ismail (Fash_01), who felt it called on consumers to reflect on their own complicity in supply chain practices and behaviour; the emphasis on ‘my clothes’ made it personal, he told me, enticing consumers to learn more about their own role in global systems of production and to engage with industry in ways that reflected their individual values.

8.3.2 Strategic partnerships

Responding to the collapse, interviewees and informants used strategic partnerships in addition to fashion and digital technology to attract and enhance engagement with

their efforts to support information provision across the RFA movement. Fashion-based stakeholders, along with labour rights organisation-based and other-related stakeholders collaborated with industry to share resources. Fashion-based stakeholders were drawn to partners who supported labour rights through the promotion of alternative fashion and apparel systems, such as knowledge exchange surrounding the mending of clothing. Collaborations were based on perceived shared values and goals, however, decisions to form strategic partnerships were also based on financial considerations. Stakeholders felt there was a risk they might have to compromise on issues. Industry-stakeholders engaged in both private and public partnerships. Publicly, certain stakeholder appeared to be working in contestation with one another. Behind the scenes, they were engaged in developing and supporting stakeholder partnerships.

Interviewees engaged in and supported partnerships with industry stakeholders, albeit in slightly different capacities. While fashion-based stakeholders engaged in efforts which connected social and environmental issues, labour rights organisation-based stakeholders focused on specific issues, targeting specific companies that had not joined the Accord or had not paid compensation into the ILO fund, for example. Social and environmental challenges also collided when Greenpeace celebrated the fashion and apparel company United Colors of Benetton for its commitments to the environment, while at the same time labour rights related-stakeholders were engaged in public campaigns which shamed the company for failing to provide financial compensation to victims of the Rana Plaza collapse (Avaaz, 2015; Franklin, 2014; Greenpeace: Detox Catwalk, 2014; The Clean Clothes Campaign, 2014; United with Victims of Benetton, 2014a, 2014b; Za, 2015).

Outside of Bangladesh, fashion-based stakeholders felt they could gain insight into how companies operated by collaborating with business. Partnering with industry on various separate projects, Eileen (Fash_03), Elizabeth (Fash_04), Sophia (Fash_08), Alice (Fash_10) and Nikki (Fash_11) each voiced how they not only felt that they could educate industry on certain best practices, but that they could also learn from the experience of industry stakeholders, to better understand the nature of the challenges they faced in supporting worker safety. In Bangladesh, foreign influence,

including from business partners, was flagged by some stakeholders as dangerous and corrupt. Here, there was a notion that foreign expertise was unable to properly support workers. On example, can be found through worker organisation. In the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse, union registration in factories almost tripled, moving from 130 at the start of 2013 to nearly 500 by 2015 (Action Aid Bangladesh, 2015). Yet a central complaint from labour rights organisation-based stakeholders was that workers were not organising in an efficient capacity and that political allegiances were playing out on the factory floor. For example, where one factory may have multiple unions, each supporting a particular political party.

For industry-based stakeholders, forming long-term partnerships with stakeholders across their supply chains would enable them to better understand, and respond, to workplace grievances related to labour rights. In some cases, it was also important for industry-based stakeholders to appear that they were engaged as partners in efforts. In the wake of the collapse, the Accord and the Alliance aimed to support long-term strategic partnerships between foreign and domestic stakeholders. Public campaigns were seen as playing a role in driving corporate agendas. Applying pressure on brands through shaming tactics was not always confrontational. While labour rights organisation-based stakeholders publicly lobbied brands to sign the Accord and the Alliance through mainly shaming tactics, fashion-based stakeholders took a different approach.

8.4 Holding space for conversation

Post Rana Plaza, the majority of RFA movement stakeholders engaged in efforts which supported resource sharing and knowledge exchange, related to the social and environmental issues challenging the global industry. Through their efforts, they not only hoped to reform the practices and behaviour of others but also looked for opportunities to gain knowledge that would ultimately reform their own practices and behaviour. Interviewees and informants pursued behaviour reform through voluntary and/or legislative means, engaging with projects, actions, and initiatives focused on improving systems of transparency, monitoring and evaluation, as well as strengthening legislation, the rule of law, and practices of good governance.

Interviewees and informants working across the RFA movement promoted different strategies to achieve these aims. Fashion-based and other-related stakeholders were particularly interested in improving their understanding related to issues across the industry, including understanding how social and environmental factors related to one another. Mapping RFA stakeholder engagement within the information provision reform pathway, tensions emerged surrounding issue prioritisation but also in regards to the power of fashion as a tool of engagement.

Stakeholders engaged in efforts within the RFA movement landscape understood ‘fashion’ in very different ways. While some viewed fashion as a powerful commodity in capitalist systems, it was also seen as a tool by which to enter conversations about capitalism, and about the Western consumer’s individual position within processes which produce fashionable clothing, as both consumer and as a transnational citizen. Fashion-based and other-related stakeholders challenged conventional tactics along the boycott/boycott continuum (Balsiger, 2013). This was a strategic departure—an entry point by which to capture attention and engage in conversations.

Across the RFA movement, fashion was a tool of attraction, used to widen engagement. For fashion-based and other-related stakeholders, it was also a window into the social life of global fashion and apparel production under the logic of capitalism (Crewe, 2018; Lash and Lury, 2007). Fashion-based and other-related stakeholders designed strategies which held space for conversation, creating opportunities to imagine different futures related to commodity production under the logic of capitalism—the potential for different social lives for the objects/things they love. These stakeholders confronted conventional binary understandings of both workers and consumers and instead worked to disrupt frames which implied that garment worker safety rested not in the hands of workers themselves, but rather depended on their fashion consumption-based efforts.

Through the information pathway, some fashion-based and other-related stakeholders supported projects where the primary aim was to create space for consumers to engage with their clothing by understanding processes of making. Upskilling

consumers to learn how to hack their wardrobes was part of this equation: Marie (Fash_05), Jane (Fash_06), Harriot (Fash_07), Kristen (Fash_09), Alice (Fash_10), and Nikki (Fash_11), for example, each supported projects aimed at teaching members of their local communities by running workshops to train would-be fashion consumers on how to dye, sew, and mend their own clothing. For these fashion-based stakeholders, consumers played an important role in shaping corporate practices, by learning how to push-back against conventional consumption practices. They wanted consumers to understand how they could foster their own unique relationship to fashion and apparel objects, and were therefore interested in projects that helped them (consumers) better understand how to make, alter and mend their own clothing. For Joseph (Other_06), creating and holding space for multiple understandings was exciting because it highlighted the complex nature of global systems of production. Such efforts aimed to connect individuals to their community, the environment, and to the wider world around them. They did not explicitly identify with ‘fashion’ as an abstract concept; their efforts supported consumers to interrogate their individual style and unpack how that might connect to or disconnect from conventional notions of fashionable clothing production and consumption.

A central distinction between fashion-based and other-related interviewees on the one hand, and labour rights organisation-based and industry-based interviewees on the other, was that the latter engaged in efforts which incorporated a tangible ‘ask’—a specific petition to sign, for example, or a particular product to buy. Although fashion-based and other-related stakeholders may have supported certain ‘asks’ operationalised by their movement colleagues, their efforts mainly involved creating space for reflection. That there was no ‘ask’ from these stakeholders was strategic. They were interested in supporting engagement with issues for the sake of understanding. Conversation itself was the primary ask. Labour rights organisation-based and industry-based interviewees also supported reflection, reflection in and of itself was not the action. For Andrew (Org_02) and Stephanie (Other_03), for example, fashion was a way to engage with citizens on issues related to structural inequalities. Andrew and Stephanie had a clear political agenda and believed

‘fashion’ provided a gateway into conversations related to capitalism and corporate misconduct.

8.5 Conclusion

Transnational efforts to support workers involved multilateral forms of engagement across a multi-mediated landscape (Crewe, 2018; Lash and Lury, 2007; McRobbie, 2016). Stakeholder efforts within the reform pathway were never static, nor were they linear. They were also not unidirectional and did not move in either ‘top-down’ or ‘bottom-up’ patterns. Responding to the Rana Plaza collapse, RFA movement stakeholders engaged in various efforts aiming to improve labour rights in Bangladesh. RFA movement interviewees and informants supported efforts which challenged stakeholders, including themselves, to reform practices and behaviour. While the majority of interviewees and informants worked on efforts hoping to raise awareness related to social and environmental challenges, their ultimate aim was to reform behaviour; for RFA movement interviewees and informants, social and environmental issues—including those which they viewed as relating to the Rana Plaza collapse—could be better supported by altering the practices and behaviours of others.

Information provision was seen as a means toward ultimately securing worker rights; across the RFA movement, ‘knowing more’ was a central way to support workers. Fashion-based efforts were not unique to fashion-based stakeholders; across the movement, stakeholders leveraged fashion as a tool to support knowledge exchange. They also formed strategic partnerships and operationalised digital tools, all with the hope of changing behaviour. For some RFA movement stakeholders, however, fashion was a tool for conversation. These stakeholders focused their efforts on creating and holding space for knowledge exchange. There was no direct ask at the end—no petition to sign, no protest to support—and that was the point. Conversation through fashion was a form of direct action, in and of itself.

Regardless of RFA movement stakeholder category, stakeholders agreed that improving or increasing related knowledge, and access to it, was essential to support workers. There seemed no question that garment worker safety in Bangladesh was

something that could be achieved, but, in order to secure it, stakeholders working across the global fashion and apparel industry, both inside and outside of Bangladesh, were seen as needing to reform certain practices and behaviour. While the overarching aims and objectives of RFA movement stakeholders working to support responsible fashion and apparel production were similar, stakeholder perceptions on the most effective means toward achieving their goals varied greatly. Views related to issue prioritisation created tensions across the movement. Strategies employed within the information provision reform pathway—through both voluntary and legal streams—were influenced by the experiences of the stakeholders working with the landscape. Interviews with RFA movement stakeholders reveal that efforts to support movement stakeholders do not move in strictly boomerang patterns. Moreover, they do not operate within ‘top-down’ or ‘bottom-up’ frameworks. The efforts of transnational stakeholders aiming to support labour rights in Bangladesh, and elsewhere are more nuanced than binary understandings.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

For over 25 years, transnational stakeholders—individuals and organisations alike—have campaigned on issues related to Bangladeshi garment workers. Researchers investigating whether transnational solidarities help or hinder conditions of labour for garment workers have identified certain patterns of intervention as problematic for reinforcing a series of binary understandings which lack any grounding in contextual knowledge related to the lived realities of both workers and consumers. In the context of the global fashion and apparel industry, workers and consumers alike have been framed as either powerful agents of change, actively engaged in efforts aimed at securing worker safety—from union organising to protesting on the high street—or as hapless victims, incapable of independent actions under the logic of capitalism. This thesis reveals that the efforts of RFA movement stakeholders are more nuanced than previously understood.

Transnational stakeholders hoping to support garment workers in Bangladesh have faced criticism for designing, promoting, and implementing strategies seen as ‘top-down’, lacking appropriate consideration of local social, political, and economic contexts (Brooks, 2002, 2007; Chowdhury, 2009; Kabeer, 2000; Kabeer and Mahmud, 2004; Ruwanpura and Roncolato, 2006; Seidman, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2011; Siddiqi, 2000, 2009, 2011; White, 2002). These works have, collectively, examined how transnational efforts can both help and hinder realities for workers, specifically where workers and working lives are framed in ways which are detached from local contexts. Whether through political consumerism in social movements, corporate social responsibility, or stakeholder engagement, strategies for change have historically disproportionately prioritised the interests of Western stakeholders. When Rana Plaza collapsed on 24 April 2013, did anything change?

The thesis considers the transnational efforts of RFA movement stakeholders in the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse in an embedded single case study. Bangladesh holds a unique relationship with the global fashion and apparel industry with respect to foreign interventions. A country often framed through catastrophe (Lewis, 2011), Rana Plaza brought with it a new crisis for the country, one which combined

previous disaster frames into one master frame. As a result, an extensive story related to poverty and labour rights has become interwoven in perceptions of garment making in Bangladesh. Notwithstanding labour rights violations associated with apparel manufacturing within the country, the RMG sector is considered a driving force in Bangladesh's economic development story (International Labour Organization and International Institute for Labour Studies, 2013). The thesis investigates the aims and strategies of elite RFA movement stakeholders engaged with initiatives and programs focused on supporting garment workers in Bangladesh, post-Rana Plaza. Thesis findings contribute to knowledge related to the nature of transnational efforts for worker safety within the global fashion and apparel industry.

9.1 Garment making in Bangladesh: Then and now

Since the ready-made garment sector first took off in Bangladesh, conditions of labour have featured regularly in transnational efforts to support worker rights (Brooks, 2007; Kabeer, 2000; Miller, 2012). In the 1980s, foreign trade unions campaigned in support of quotas against Bangladesh, as they perceived themselves in direct competition with garment workers there (Kabeer, 2000). Then, in the 1990s, as consumers were outraged and called for boycotts of products using child labour in Bangladesh, garment workers and their families in Bangladesh protested the Harkin Bill (Brooks, 2007). The relationship between international and domestic interests has been one of cooperation and contestation. Foreign intervention into the sector had a lasting effect on the government of Bangladesh who has, since the 1980s, worked with transnational stakeholders to protect its RMG-sector.

This increase in transnational engagement coincides with changes made by global fashion and apparel companies, in terms of altering business practices to move with the logic of capitalism, in search of economic savings. Historically, transnational labour rights organisation-based stakeholder efforts aimed at supporting garment workers targeted governments, foreign and domestic. The state was previously seen as a major institutional player in securing individual rights, with calls for actions asking individuals to petition their government to place pressure on foreign governments through diplomatic means. These stakeholders began to alter their

approach in response to changes in the organisation of capitalism. As supply chains grew more and more complex, campaign strategies and tactics began sidestepping state institutions to focus instead on the market. This shift meant targeting corporations through consumer demand (Seidman, 2007). Directing attention to the impacts of production on workers and the environment highlights contradiction within what is presented to the consumer as beautiful on the one hand, and that the global fashion and apparel industry actively works to conceal, on the other (Crewe, 2018).

In the context of the global fashion and apparel industry, the notion of ‘responsibility’ has been used to map accountability as well as to ponder relationships of connectivity. Considering the next steps toward securing worker safety in Bangladesh in the wake of the collapse, for example, and in response to post-Rana Plaza partnership-based initiatives such as the Accord and the Alliance, Baumann-Pauly et al. (2018) propose a model of ‘shared responsibility’. This is a model which calls for a broadening of partnerships amongst far-reaching local and international stakeholders (Baumann-Pauly et al., 2018; Kabeer, 2019). Despite claiming to propose a pathway toward ‘sustainable fashion’, consumers are not explicitly flagged as relevant stakeholders in such a vision of shared responsibility. Moreover, as Kabeer (2019) points out, any such model must consider a fair distribution of responsibilities; as was seen with the Accord and the Alliance, factory owners were made responsible for the cost of remediations, which placed increasing pressures on these local stakeholders whose share in profits is lacking compared to those of foreign buyers and even some governments, through taxes levied on imports at borders (Kabeer, 2019). Efforts aimed at improving conditions of labour with respect to health and safety have focused their attention on the structural integrity of factories, alongside improving wages and access to the right to organise. Meanwhile, Prentice et al. (2018) have called for a more nuanced understanding of health and safety. Despite pointing to systems of fast-fashion production as contributing to social and environmental exploitation, clothing has been considered mainly through a material lens, and in mostly economic terms. Yet fashion is both material and symbolic.

9.2 The RFA movement and its global agendas

Transnational efforts within the RFA movement are more nuanced than they first appear. RFA movement stakeholder engagement with the movement depends on various factors, such as experience and access to information, as well as on the amount of personal, professional and/or organisational risk they can take on. In addition to these determinants, however, efforts also depend on an individual's ability to reflect on their own behaviour within the movement, as well as their interpretation of conduct from their movement colleagues. The majority of research participants relied on market-based solutions in their efforts to support workers in Bangladesh. Some stakeholders, however, were engaged in fashion-based projects and initiatives which stood apart from their movement colleagues in important ways. They saw fashion as a tool to ignite conversation as a form of direct action. Fashion-based activism was itself not unique within the RFA movement.

This thesis has examined the nature of transnational efforts from the perspectives of the elite stakeholders designing and delivering them. It reveals that RFA movement efforts are not as divided as they may first appear. It is challenging confine to RFA movement interviewees and informants within the margins of conceptual categories, as stakeholders were engaged in a wide range of initiatives across the global fashion and apparel industry, wearing multiple hats. Nonetheless, by separating research participants into imperfect ideal type categories for heuristic purposes (Swedberg, 2018), differences and similarities between them emerged. A closer look at efforts within each group, however, reveals that transnational RFA movement stakeholders are active within the movement in similar ways. Across the movement, participants felt that notions of fashion could be leveraged to attract support and broaden audience engagement. The strategy of fashion was not unique to FashRev, nor was it reserved for fashion-based stakeholders. Interviewees and informants perceived that alongside government failures and corporate greed, consumer demand for fashionable, fast-fashion products played a substantive role in creating conditions of labour which led to the Rana Plaza disaster. Despite emphasising the role of the consumer, none called for boycotts. Instead, they worked to achieve some balance in their efforts, in terms of the amount of pressure they recommended consumers apply;

they sought consumer engagement, but also expressed some concern that consumers won't detach from the issues, through either boycotts or buycotts. Fashion was used as a conversation starter for RFA movement stakeholders to share information; fashion was used as a springboard to entice individuals to alter their practices or behaviour—from applying pressure on brands using naming and shaming tactics to encouraging suppliers to commitments to certification schemes.

Fashion was not the only tool RFA movement stakeholders shared. RFA movement stakeholders also shared certain practical restrictions in their efforts. For example, with respect to pressures of securing funding and media attention, and also the amount of personal and professional risk they were willing to take. As a result, they also leveraged strategic partnerships to advance their short and long term aims. Irrespective of RFA movement stakeholder category, interviewees and informants maintained an overarching, long-term, ambition of supporting labour rights for garment workers in Bangladesh, and elsewhere. Stakeholders called for voluntary reform while also seeking legislative changes. Strategic partnerships were used to advance claims, as stakeholders applied multilateral pressure understanding that voluntary (corporate sanctioned) and legislative (state-sponsored) interventions offered a combination of short- and long-term capacities of support.

9.3 The Fashion Revolution

The FashRev website provided an analytic starting point for the thesis. Since it began, dreamt up on a whim by its Founders, FashRev has grown to support a global coalition of stakeholders hoping to transform business as usual in global systems of fashion and apparel production and consumption. Stakeholders connected to the FashRev project were active within the RFA movement before the collapse. FashRev provided the space and scope for them to organise efforts. The thesis examined the Fashion Revolution project through its website, describing its organisation, wider network and campaign. Although the Rana Plaza collapse inspired the initiative, it represented just one of the issues FashRev stood for. Operating as a coalition magnet, the FashRev project claimed that garment worker rights and environmental security should be protected in equal measure, alongside creative expression and profit. At

the surface, Fashion Revolution appears revolutionary. By its own account, it filled a gap within the RFA movement in terms of supporting pro-fashion efforts.

The Rana Plaza disaster inspired FashRev organisers; the project was established in the wake of the collapse as ‘a call to arms’—the FashRev website uses imagery of the disaster, and it schedules its annual campaign to coincide with April 24th (Fashion Revolution Day and Fashion Revolution Week) to commemorate Rana Plaza victims and survivors. The FashRev website explicitly called for improvements to working conditions for garment workers in Bangladesh and elsewhere. As a *pro-fashion* activist website, however, there were other demands: it also called for improvements to environmental issues caused by global fashion and apparel production; an increase in consumer awareness to support informed buying power; transparent supply chains through increased social auditing and public reporting; increased involvement from government to support best practices; and a refusal to compromise sartorial aesthetic. To satisfy these demands, the FashRev website offered information and resources designed to reform consumer, brand and government behaviour.

Exploring the FashRev network through the Country Chapters for Kenya, Bangladesh, Germany and Canada, the thesis demonstrated how country chapters throughout the network were distinct. The 2015 FashRev campaign asked its supporters to leverage their influence over brands and call for transparency. The labour rights of garment workers, the campaign posited, were tied to such consumer-based actions: ‘Be curious. Find out. Do something.’ The campaign called on stakeholders throughout all stages of fashion production and consumption to engage with the project. While the campaign stressed online actions, it also engaged in campaign events offline, orchestrated and sponsoring workshops, fashion shows, film screenings, etc. The FashRev website showcased the multi-mediated nature of the global project, harnessing web-based tools to enable its organisers to expand engagement with its community. Despite aiming to advance multiple claims, the FashRev website did not address or formally acknowledge uneven balances of power present within the global fashion and apparel industries and transnational networks of advocacy (Siddiqi, 2000, 2009, 2011), as well as in relation to digital divides in online communities (Schradié, 2011). FashRev did not set out to challenge global

structural inequality. However, it utilised the Rana Plaza collapse to ignite a wider-ranging movement of stakeholders determined to prevent another Rana Plaza from taking place.

9.4 Contribution, limitations and recommendations

A review of relevant literature raised questions as to whether transnational stakeholders working within the RFA movement were aware of tensions relating to structural inequalities and imbalances of power across the global fashion and apparel industry. Further, it revealed gaps in knowledge with respect to limited understandings on fashion-based engagement within the antisweatshop movement. Fashion had been considered in economic terms in relation to supply chains and worker/consumer binary dependency frameworks (Brooks, 2002, 2007; Chowdhury, 2009; Kabeer, 2000; Kabeer and Mahmud, 2004; Ruwanpura and Roncolato, 2006; Seidman, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2011; Siddiqi, 2000, 2009, 2011; White, 2002). It has also been considered for its ability to push back against dominant cultural norms and values with sartorial dissent (de Casanova and Jafar, 2016; Fletcher and Tham, 2014b; McRobbie, 1997; Reger, 2012). Fashion had also been examined in terms of practices of consumption, with respect to use and rhythm (Fletcher, 2014a, 2016; Fletcher and Tham, 2014b), as well as through research which problematise notions of consumer, or user, ‘choice’ when confronted with social pressures, such as realities of class and gender (McRobbie, 1997; Skeggs, 2004). Research also considered fashion systems as operating within a global culture industry (Crewe, 2018; Lash and Lury, 2007; McRobbie, 2016).

This thesis contributes to this space by considering connections between transnational efforts aimed at supporting labour rights and the potential role of fashion to support or confound solidarities. This thesis reveals that stakeholders understand their efforts as moving in multilateral directions. Research participants were clued in to the realities of global capitalism, and the pressures and restrictions these placed on their ability to support garment workers. Here, stakeholders were challenged to strike a balance between their short- and long-term aims. To do this, they attempted to work flexibly, and reflexively, to better respond to the multi-

mediated and multilateral nature of the global fashion and apparel industry, an ever-shifting landscape. Irrespective of their analytic category, RFA movement stakeholders understood behaviour reform as providing the most opportunity to support workers. They designed, developed, and implemented initiatives which supported knowledge exchange, believing that better ‘knowing’ would create social change. Efforts were operationalised through an information provision reform pathway, where stakeholders actively sought out and shared information with their movement colleagues. Types of knowledge shared within the pathway directly connected to stakeholder circumstance, including public and private financial barriers—from balancing a company’s bottom-line while supporting reputation management to an individual’s own socioeconomic position—impacted how stakeholders engaged with knowledge exchange within the information provision reform pathway. Knowledge sharing is not unique to elite stakeholders, however. As the research has focused on understanding the efforts of transnational stakeholders in the wake of the collapse, the voices of both workers and consumers are absent here. Further limitations to the research relate to the impact of issue prioritisation, as well as to the wider network; while tensions relating to issue prioritisation emerged throughout the data, the thesis did not explicitly investigate transnational efforts in relation to supporting environmental justice in connection with the global fashion and apparel industry, for example.

The FashRev website shared resources and addressed fashion through a multi-mediated website. These tactics were not unique to the FashRev project. Stakeholders across the RFA movement operationalised their efforts through an information provision reform pathway, where conventional practice involves sharing resources and knowledge to ultimately reform certain behaviours through either voluntary or legislative means as a theory of change. Interviewees and informants understood knowledge exchange as a central avenue toward changing behaviours they deemed as hurtful for workers. Fashion, strategic partnerships, and digital technologies were tools which were harnessed by stakeholders across the movement. These tools were leveraged cautiously. The use of fashion as a tool mostly related to interventions concerned with supply and demand, linking the expectations of

Western consumers to those of workers. As a result, most fashion-based efforts were aimed at changing behaviour in relation to a linear understanding of supply chain logistics and the dynamic nature of global capitalism. For some fashion-based and other-related stakeholders, however, fashion provided an opportunity for general conversations related to the global fashion and apparel industry. For these stakeholders, fashion was about making connections. Rather than direct individuals toward specific actions, they held space for conversations: the conversation was itself a direct form of action.

Where RFA movement stakeholders differed, however, was in the specific nature of their strategies of intervention. Stakeholders based their strategies not only on what they believed would be the most effective methods towards achieving their aims but also on what they determined would be the most successful strategy, given situational challenges they felt would inevitably constrict their efforts. Some engaged in tactics that pursued behaviour reform through voluntary means—seeking to increase transparency through elective corporate reporting, monitoring, and evaluation, for example—while others sought behaviour reform through legislative means, supporting projects and initiatives designed to strengthen legislation, law enforcement and global governance. The majority, however, adopted a blended approach, targeting both industry and government. These stakeholders pointed to patterns of Western consumption, corporate misconduct, weak legislation and an absence of governance as contributing to conditions which lead to the Rana Plaza collapse.

Looking ahead, findings from this thesis offer insight for stakeholders working within the RFA movement, as well as individuals and organisations aiming to support transnational solidarities elsewhere: (1) Given the ever-shifting nature of systems of production and consumption under the logic of capitalism, any proposed model for shared-responsibility must be flexible and resilient, capable of shifting and moving across the global culture industry in non-linear patterns, altering in formation in response to knowledge acquired through social interactions. (2) Stakeholders must avoid the use of damaging tropes which frame workers as vulnerable and consumers as powerful; both workers and consumers should be understood as living in complex

realities. Binary categorisations are unhelpful, working only to recycle ahistorical narratives that do not represent current conditions of the global fashion and apparel industry. (3) Consideration for socioeconomic pressures at work within the culture industry should be at the forefront of transnational efforts; across the global fashion and apparel industry, financial circumstance plays a role in impacting decision-making processes. (4) Fashion must be understood as both material and symbolic and should be recognised for its potential not only as a tool of attraction but as a means of engagement. (5) And finally, any model for shared responsibility must support both workers and industry through periods of transition—support for boycotts and buycotts risks compromising livelihoods of workers and factory owners in Bangladesh and elsewhere.

9.5 Conclusion

This thesis opened with a poem written to commemorate the victims of the Rana Plaza collapse. The author juxtaposes notions of aesthetic beauty against perceived social and environmental realities embedded within conventional manufacturing processes—from chemicals in fabric dyes polluting waters to workers being prevented from using the toilet while on the clock. Three tensions related to transnational efforts across the RFA movement landscape appear in the poem: information provision, issue prioritisation, and notions of power dynamics between workers and consumer. Closing the thesis, I am reminded of Ismail’s call for patience from within the RFA movement community: change, he told me, is “not possible in one day. It takes time”. There are financial barriers to improving conditions of work in factories. Ismail worried about the reputational damage Rana Plaza had created for the sector. While he was optimistic, enthusiastic to develop systems which supported both workers and the environment, he stressed the burden financial pressures from up-front costs bring to factories.

Tensions continue to play out within the RFA movement, itself a movement of movements located within the wider global social justice movement (Cox and Gunvald, 2007). In 2018, Extinction Rebellion launched in the UK (Extinction Rebellion, 2019a). A non-violent civil disobedience organisation calling for

government action against the threat of climate change, Extinction Rebellion has expanded into a global movement with working groups in various countries (Extinction Rebellion, 2019b). One of the campaigns run through Extinction Rebellion targets the fashion and apparel industry. The #XR52 #BoycottFashion campaign calls on supporters to stop buying new clothing for 52 weeks to prevent a climate emergency (Extinction Rebellion, 2019c). Although the #XR52 #BoycottFashion campaign apologetically declares awareness of potentially negative consequences a boycott may have, organisers argue that more harm will be done, long term, to more individuals, if a total boycott is not in place (Extinction Rebellion, 2019c).

Moving forward, overarching challenges facing the RFA movement will involve reconciling tensions between the social and the environmental, as well as working to bridge and confront ongoing structural divides, reinforced through binary framing: even if buildings are safe, the right to organise is supported, and a living wage guaranteed for garment workers producing clothing for Western markets, the environmental impact of the global fashion and apparel industry would remain an issue, as well as notions of dependencies between workers and consumers, with safety and opportunities for work reliant on consumer demand. Unlike their movement colleagues, fashion-based stakeholders incorporated environmental considerations into their efforts within the RFA movement.

In the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse, Chowdhury (2014) made an optimistic call for new forms of solidarities—reflexive practices, grounded in knowledge related to the dynamics of positionalities. This thesis has shown that transnational efforts within the RFA movement have mostly failed to meet this vision. This thesis reveals that transnational efforts responding to the collapse, fashion-related or otherwise, marked no significant departure from conventional strategies within the RFA movement. While some fashion-related efforts disrupted patterns of convention by holding space for conversations, most RFA movement stakeholder efforts remained anchored to binary, asymmetrical, and homogeneous frameworks, such as those which separate workers from consumers, in line with their placement along fashion and apparel supply chains under the logic of global capitalism. Despite attempts to

challenge the single-story in the wake of the Rana Plaza collapse, binary divisions between consumer and worker remain at large in the RFA movement. The Western consumer remains understood as holding power over workers and their lives.

Appendix A: Death Traps campaign targeting North Face

**DEATHTRAPS**

NEVER STOP EXPLOITING

HOME | LATEST NEWS | THE FACTS | GET INVOLVED | BANGLADESH WORKER TOUR



END DEATHTRAPS BANGLADESH WORKER TOUR

In response to the Rana Plaza factory collapse and ongoing violations of worker safety in Bangladesh, students at over a hundred universities have mobilized to End Deathtraps in Bangladesh. So far, 12 universities have endorsed the Accord thanks to student efforts.

Now, United Students Against Sweatshops is conducting a second round of a nationwide worker tour with Aleya Akter, the General Secretary of the Bangladeshi Garment and Industrial Workers Federation, and Aklima Khanam, a survivor of the deadly Rana Plaza collapse. The tour is exposing the hypocrisy of North Face/VF Corporation's safety scheme and calling on universities to cut ties with VF brands, including JanSport and VF Imagewear, unless the company signs the Accord. The tour will culminate at a community forum in VF's hometown of Greensboro, NC where workers and students will expose the truth about VF's deadly business practices in Bangladesh.

TOUR PARTICIPANTS

FROM BANGLADESH TO YOUR CAMPUS

Aleya Akter is a 28-year old labor organizer. She is the General Secretary of the Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation, one of the leading garment worker unions in Bangladesh, and she is also the president of her factory-level union. She has worked with both BGIWF and the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity to lead the fight for safe and dignified working conditions in Bangladesh.

Aklima Khanam, is a 18-year-old Bangladeshi garment worker. She worked for over a year as a sewing operator at a factory located in the Rana Plaza building. On the day of the Rana Plaza collapse, Aklima was working on the 6th floor of the building. She was trapped in the rubble for two days before she was finally rescued. Since the collapse, Aklima has been actively involved in organizing efforts to pressure apparel brands to pay compensation to Rana Plaza survivors and sign the Bangladesh Safety Accord.

TOUR SCHEDULE

HERE ARE THE FIRST 5 STOPS. MORE STOPS WILL BE LISTED SOON!

School	Date	City	State
Washington State University	3/31/2014	Pullman	Washington
Arizona State University	4/1/2014	Tempe	Arizona
UC-Riverside	4/2/2014	Riverside	California
University of Southern California	4/2/2014	Los Angeles	California
UC-Santa Barbara	4/3/2014	Santa Barbara	California



United Students Against Sweatshops is a national student labor organization fighting for workers' rights with locals on over 150 campuses.

United Students Against Sweatshops
1155 Connecticut Avenue NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036

Appendix B: 'We Are Committed' website announcement, Gap Inc.

aDRESSED

THE OFFICIAL BLOG OF GAP INC.

WE ARE COMMITTED: A NEW GAP INC. WEBSITE

May 19, 2013 · Experience · by Gap Inc. blogs

We know that many of you have questions or concerns about our work in Bangladesh and work that Gap Inc. does around the world. While we didn't operate in the building that tragically collapsed in Bangladesh last month, we're committed to worker safety and understand the urgency to make lasting, meaningful change.

To help answer your questions and have the chance to hear from you, we've launched a new website, [WeAreCommitted.com](#). There, you can find information and updates on our work with Bangladesh, as well as the other communities where we live and work, and you can share your thoughts with us, as well as ask questions.

Thanks for your interest – we look forward to hearing from you.

Posted by [Gap Inc. blogs](#) in [Experience](#) and tagged [Gap Inc.](#), [We Are Committed](#)

COMMENTS (8)

PREVIEW

POST COMMENT...



Peggy

3 years ago

I am appalled to learn that your company did not immediately sign on to the multinational agreement about safe working conditions in Bangladesh (and other countries). I had always been sure that the Gap would be a promoter of such initiatives.

I do not purchase items from Walmart- and I will no longer be purchasing clothing from your companies until I am certain that you have, in fact, agreed to the highest possible standards of worker safety.

NEWS BY BRAND



BANANA REPUBLIC

OLD NAVY

ATHLETA

INTERMIX

Gap Inc.

MUST READ



FELL INTO THE GAP: ONE STORE

**Optional**

3 years ago

Cool site

**AVY**

3 years ago

You need to do something beyond setting up an asinine PR website. Take some real action and responsibility. Sign the Accord on Fire and Building Safety! Put your money where your mouth is since that's the only language you guys seem to understand. We won't buy from your brand(s) until you do.

**Bomi Kim**

3 years ago

It is nice to hear that you are committed to worker safety but actions speak louder than words. The fact GAP refuses to sign onto the safety accord is more telling about your true intentions than the nice words on your website. I am more than willing to pay a little more for my cheap clothing especially if it means that the workers making those clothes will not DIE. Until GAP becomes a true "leader" in responsible corporate citizenship, I will not be shopping at GAP or any of its brands.

**Susanne McCannon**

3 years ago

Your "We are Committed" public relations campaign is ridiculous. There is nothing concrete, nothing of substance in that video. That woman is just a pretty face put in front of the cameras to give the public the sense that the GAP really cares about the workers in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, your focus on profits and cheap labor over the lives and well-being of the workers in Bangladesh is common practice in our consumer driven culture. If over 1000 U.S. workers died in a factory here, we would consider it an act of war, and we wouldn't stand for it. If only we (ALL of us - consumers, CEO's and shareholders of these companies, and the governments) valued these lives more than cheap labor, exports, profits and boosting share prices, then maybe we could live in a civilized world. In the meantime, at the VERY LEAST, your company could sign this accord and give some substance and accountability to your "commitment". Instead of producing slick, meaningless videos, and trying to cover your ass with public relations campaigns, I wish that you would spend more time and money developing ways to produce clothing without exploiting the workers of Bangladesh.

**Steven Lindsay**

3 years ago

According to your website the excuse for not signing is that American companies can't, for some new unexplained reason. But that hasn't stopped Abercrombie & Fitch and PVH (which owns Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein) from joining! It's time Gap to stopped siding with Walmart and join the Bangladesh Fire and Building Safety Agreement. Surely you don't want to be in the same basket as Walfart??? Come On!

**Henni Pascoe, Germany**

3 years ago



THERE'S SOMETHING MISSING

TWITTER**Gap Inc.**

Run, swim, jump, or do your own thing. It's inspiring seeing others succeed doing what they love. #MotivationMonday <https://t.co/6AQtnalg8y>
13 hours ago

INSTAGRAM

Hello Gap,
I'm glad to read that you'll commit yourself to worker-safety in Bangladesh. BUT: Only when I KNOW that you have signed the strictest possible agreement (like demanded by Avaaz and textile-workers themselves, for example), will I and all my friend shop with GAP. We cannot bear the thought that other people have to suffer, get killed or can't live on their earnings, so that we can buy cheap clothes.
Yours hopefully,
Henni Pascoe



Gavin

3 years ago

Why Gap and Wal-Mart remain opposed to signing the safety accord that H&M and other retailers have already signed is perplexing and appalling. This inaction after such horror in Bangladesh has eviscerated my confidence in the Gap brand. No longer will my family or I be purchasing from Gap, Old Navy, or Banana Republic!



CAREERS



Join us! Explore opportunities with the only U.S. apparel company with a portfolio of globally recognized, specialty apparel brands ranging from value to luxury.






[← GETTING AND KEEPING A JOB: THIS WAY AHEAD...](#)

[HOW THESE STUDENTS CHANGED MY LIFE →](#)




Appendix C: Timeline²³

Trade Agreement	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)		Multifibre Arrangement (MFA) (or the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing): Under General Systems Preferences (GSP) Bangladesh exempt from limiting imports into EU and USA as a Least Developed Country (LDC) - Leading to 'quota hopping' by producers from newly industrial countries		
Initiative/ Program/ Meeting	The Association for World Peace (today known as War on Want)		Bangladesh garment sector is born.	Garments in Bangladesh starts to grow; mostly domestic production	
Disaster					
Date Year	1948	March 1951	1970s	1974	1976
					
Trade Agreement	Bangladesh government introduces New Industrial Policy - offers incentives for export-oriented production	UK, France and USA impose quotas on imports to Bangladesh through MFAs 'anti-surge' clause, arguing imports from Bangladesh compromised industry in their own countries	UK, France and Europe lift quotas; Canada and USA keep quotas in place		
Initiative/ Program/ Meeting			International Labor Rights Education & Research Fund launched (now named International Labor Rights Forum, or ILRF)	Bangladesh Garment Exporters Manufacturing Association (BGMEA) is established	
Disaster	2/3 of factories in Bangladesh close down		Industry regains momentum		
Date Year	1982	1985	1986	the late 1990s	
					

²³ Data presented in this timeline was collated from multiple sources: Balsiger (2014b); CBC News (2013); Clean Clothes Campaign (2006); Clean Clothes Campaign and Network (2013); International Labor Rights Forum (2016); International Labour Organization (2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2013d, 2013f, 2013g); Kabeer (2000); Labour Behind the Label (2016); Maquila Solidarity Network (2016); Miller (2012); Nova (2010); The International Labour Organization (2014); War on Want (2016).

Trade Agreement		US Senate sees the 'Harkin Bill' introduced (Child Labor Deterrence Bill)			
Initiative/ Programme/ Meeting	Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) founded: The Netherlands		Bangladesh government places BGMEA in charge of Utilisation Declaration (UD) for importing raw materials duty-free for apparel production	Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN) established	Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BKMEA) is established
Disaster	Thousands of children lose jobs in garment factories				
Date Year	1989-1990	1993	1994	1994	1996
					
Trade Agreement		Everything But Arms agreement: EU countries apply quota and duty-free status for LDCs		World Trade Organization allows countries to apply restrictions on the number of imports from China.	
Initiative/ Programme/ Meeting				Labour Behind the Label (LBL) founded: The UK	
Disaster	53 workers died at Choudury Knitwear: 53 workers died	Maico Sweater: 24 workers died			
Date Year	2000	2001	2001	2002	December 2004
					
Trade Agreement					
Initiative/ Programme/ Meeting				Multifibre Arrangement (MFA) Forum: stakeholders meet and attempt industry-wide initiative on safety: no agreement reached.	
Disaster	Misco Supermarket building: 9 workers killed	23 died at Shan Knitting: 23 workers killed	Spectrum Sweater factory building collapse: 64 dead, 80 injured	KTS Textile Industries factory fire: 61 workers killed	
Date Year	2004	2005	11-Apr 2005	2006	23-Feb 2006
					

Trade Agreement					EU and USA lift limitations on imported goods from China
Initiative/ Programme/ Meeting					United Federation of Garment Workers call for industry measures to protect workers
Disaster	Phoenix Garments: building collapse (other tenants also in building): 22 construction workers killed, 50 injured	Imam Group of Industries stampede after a transformer exploded: 57 workers injured	Fire and stampede at Saiem Fashions and several other factories:		
Date	24-Feb	24-Feb	11-Apr		
Year	2006	2006	2006	2009	
Trade Agreement					
Initiative/ Programme/ Meeting					Stakeholders meet again to attempt an initiative on safety: no agreement reached
Disaster	Garib & Garib Factory: 21 dead, 6 injured	Matrix Sweaters: 1 worker killed	Factory explosion followed by worker stampede: 2 dead, 62 injured	That's It Sportswear factory fire: 29 dead, 57 injured	
Date	25-Feb	20-Mar	03-Dec	14-Dec	
Year	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010
Trade Agreement					
Initiative/ Programme/ Meeting					United Nations (UN) Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: signed by all member countries
			Joint Memo of Understanding (MoU) on Fire and Building Safety (will become the Accord)	PVH Corps. signs MoU with international organisations and global and Bangladeshi unions	
Disaster		Tazreen factory fire: 112 dead, 200 injured		Smart Export Garments factory fire: 7 dead	
Date		24-Nov	15-Mar	21-Mar	26-Jan
Year	2011	2012	2012	2012	2013

Trade Agreement					
Initiative/ Programme/ Meeting	Improving Working Conditions in the Ready-Made Garment Sector in Bangladesh (RMGP Programme): ILO, Canada, Netherlands, and the UK	National Tripartite Plan of Action on Fire Safety in the RMG Sector (Bangladesh gov't and tripartite stakeholders)		Joint Tripartite Statement adopted (Bangladesh gov't and tripartite stakeholders)	
Disaster			Rana Plaza building collapse: >1,100 dead, thousands injured		Tung Hai Sweater factory fire: 9 dead
Date Year	22-Oct 2013	24-Mar 2013	24-Apr 2013	04-May 2013	09-May 2013
					
Trade Agreement					
Initiative/ Programme/ Meeting	The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (the Accord) is signed	Accord plan of implementation agreed	National Tripartite Plan of Action on Fire Safety and Structural Integrity in the Garment Sector of Bangladesh (NTPA) (Bangladesh gov't and tripartite stakeholders)	EU Sustainability Compact: the agreement between ILO, EU, and Bangladesh government	The Rana Plaza Coordination Committee: ILO Trust to manage compensation for victims of Rana Plaza
Disaster					
Date Year	15-May 2013	June 2013	July 2013	08-Jul 2013	13-Sep 2013
					
Trade Agreement					
Initiative/ Programme/ Meeting		Bangladesh Accord Foundation is incorporated in the Netherlands	ILO launches 3-year Programme in partnership with Bangladesh gov't: 'Improving Working Conditions in the Ready-Made Garment Sector' - (RMGP)	RMG Centre of Excellence (COE) Project: Partnership for training between H&M and the ILO	
Disaster	Aswad garment factory fire: 10 dead (estimated)				Fire at Matrix Sweaters Ltd: No deaths, 10-15 injuries
Date Year	08-Oct 2013	Oct 2013	21-Oct 2013	01-Jan 2014	02-Feb 2016
					

Appendix D: Interview Schedule

The following interview questions we used as a guide only. While most of the interviewees answered each question, not all questions were asked. Interviewees were encouraged to discuss/address any issues they thought would be most relevant.

1. How did you come to work on (insert association/company/organisation/etc.) and how you would describe that work now?
2. Is the concept of ‘fashion’ important in this work?
3. What would you say are your top priorities when working in this space?
4. What about short-term and long-term goals?
5. You were active in this space before Rana Plaza collapsed, and I wondered if anything changed for you and/or your work when the building collapsed on 24 of April 2013.
6. Through your work with (insert association/company/organisation/etc.), you have worked with many different stakeholders and stakeholder groups. What draws you to work with, or partner with particular stakeholders and stakeholder groups?
7. You have worked with [insert fashion-based activist project, such as Fashion Revolution]. Why did you get involved with the project?
8. Do you feel ‘fashion activism’, from groups such as Fashion Revolution and others, support the work that you do, in terms of supporting the short- and long-term goals you have outlined?
9. When you work for (insert association/company/organisation/etc.) and other projects, are you working as an employee, a volunteer, as an activist, or...? How would you describe that work?
10. Your own work in (insert association/company/organisation/etc.) may operate in online space—using internet tools such as social media, etc. How important would you say online activism is? In your view, does online activism make waves offline?

Appendix E: Research participants²⁴

Fashion-based (Fash) RFA movement stakeholder interviewees and informants		
Code	Pseudonym	Description
Fash_01	Ismail	Fashion designer and educator; has worked on projects/initiatives connected to FashRev.
Fash_02	Mark	Entrepreneur and organiser; has worked on projects/initiatives connected to FashRev.
Fash_03	Eileen	Entrepreneur and RFA movement spokesperson; has worked on projects/initiatives connected to FashRev.
Fash_04	Elizabeth	Fashion-based entrepreneur and organiser; has worked on projects/initiatives connected to FashRev.
Fash_05	Marie	Entrepreneur, volunteer, writer, and activist; has worked on projects/initiatives connected to FashRev.
Fash_06	Jane	Entrepreneur and activist; has worked on projects/initiatives connected to FashRev.
Fash_07	Harriot	Entrepreneur, activist and educator; has worked on projects/initiatives connected to FashRev.
Fash_08	Sophia	Entrepreneur and RFA movement spokesperson; has worked on projects/initiatives connected to FashRev.
Fash_09	Kristen	Designer, researcher, consultant and campaign organiser; has worked on projects/initiatives connected to FashRev.
Fash_10	Alice	Educator, consultant and entrepreneur; has worked on projects/initiatives connected to FashRev.
Fash_11	Nikki	Educator, consultant and entrepreneur; has worked on projects/initiatives connected to FashRev.

²⁴ All names of interviewees have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Organisation-based (Org) RFA movement stakeholder interviewees and informants		
Code	Pseudonym	Description
Org_01	Jude	An experienced organiser at NGO, working on projects connected to the collapse.
Org_02	Andrew	An experienced organiser at NGO, working on projects connected to the collapse.
Org_03	Emma	An experienced organiser at NGO, working on projects connected to the collapse.
Org_04	Farzi	Garment worker organiser based in Bangladesh, working on projects connected to the collapse.
Org_05	Abdul	Garment worker organiser based in Bangladesh, working on projects connected to the collapse.
Org_06	Amir	Senior researcher at Bangladesh-based NGO, working on projects connected to the collapse.
Org_07	Kamal	Garment worker organiser based in Bangladesh, working on projects connected to the collapse.
Org_08	Karim	Senior researcher at Bangladesh-based NGO, working on projects connected to the collapse.
Org_09	Stephen	A senior manager at an international organisation, working on projects connected to industry.
Org_10	Ishrat	Garment worker organiser based in Bangladesh, working on projects connected to the collapse.
Org_11	Lucy	An experienced organiser at NGO, working on projects connected to the collapse.
Org_12	Suzie	An experienced organiser at NGO, working on projects connected to the collapse.
Org_13	Henry	A senior manager at an international organisation, working on projects connected to industry.
OrgInfo_01	Thomas	Educator and advisor, working on projects connected to the collapse.
OrgInfo_02	Fahmida	Garment worker organiser based in Bangladesh, working on projects connected to the collapse.
OrgInfo_03	Mohammed	A senior manager at an international NGO, working on projects connected to the collapse.
OrgInfo_04	Nasir	A senior manager at an international NGO, working on projects connected to the collapse.

Industry-based (Ind) RFA movement stakeholder interviewees and informants		
Code	Pseudonym	Description
Ind_01	Nick	Experienced CSR professional at fashion and apparel company.
Ind_02	Mike	Experienced CSR professional at fashion and apparel company.
Ind_03	Per	Experienced CSR professional at fashion and apparel company.
Ind_04	Robert	Experienced CSR professional at fashion and apparel company.
Ind_05	Jenny	Senior coordinator at industry association.
Ind_06	Mizan	A senior manager at industry association.
Ind_07	Foysol	A senior manager at industry association.
Ind_08	Syed	Coordinator at industry association.
Ind_09	Shakil	CSR consultant.
IndInfo_01	Ferog	Coordinator at industry association.

Other Stakeholder (Other) RFA movement stakeholder interviewees and informants		
Code	Pseudonym	Description
Other_01	Delwar	Artist and activist, working on projects connected to the collapse.
Other_02	Brian	Artist and activist, working on projects connected to the collapse.
Other_03	Stephanie	Writer and activist, working on projects connected to the collapse.
Other_04	Julia	Writer, activist and educator.
Other_05	Fakir	Artist and activist, working on projects connected to the collapse and to FashRev.
Other_06	Joseph	Writer, activist and educator, working on projects connected to the collapse and to FashRev.
Other_07	Tim	Writer, activist and consultant, working on projects connected to the collapse and to FashRev.
Other_08	Tanvir	Coordinator, working on projects connected to the collapse.

Other_09	Katie	Senior coordinator, working on projects connected to the collapse.
OtherInfo_01	Lynn	Experienced coordinator, working on projects connected to the collapse.
OtherInfo_02	Martina	Experienced coordinator, working on projects connected to the collapse.
OtherInfo_03	Abu	Experienced factory auditor.
OtherInfo_04	Catherine	A senior manager at an international organisation, working on projects connected to industry.
OtherInfo_05	Nandini	Advisor at an international organisation, working on projects connected to the industry.

Appendix F: Consent form

Interviewees signed and returned the following consent form.²⁵

²⁵ This consent form has been adapted from Gray (2009: 393).

Gray, David E. (2009) *Doing research in the real world*, Los Angeles, Calif.: SAGE.



Consent Form		
Research conducted by Mary Hanlon, PhD candidate, Sociology, The University of Edinburgh Email: m.f.hanlon@sms.ed.ac.uk Research Student Profile: http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/our_students/research_student_profiles/sociology/mary_hanlon		
This consent form is designed to check that you understand the purposes of the research, that you are aware of your rights as a participant and to confirm that you are willing to take part		
Please tick as appropriate		
	YES	NO
1. I understand the purpose of Mary Hanlon's PhD research is to better understand activism in the fashion industry, in the aftermath of the Rana Plaza building collapse in Bangladesh.		
2. I have received sufficient information about the research for me to decide whether to take part.		
3. I understand that I am free to refuse to take part if I wish.		
4. I understand that I may withdraw my participation in the research at any time without having to provide a reason.		
5. I know that I can ask for further information about the research from Mary Hanlon.		
6. I understand that all information arising from the research will be treated as confidential.		
7. I know that it will not be possible to identify any individual interview participant in the research, including myself.		
8. I agree to take part in the research.		
Signature:	Date:	
Name in block letters, please:		
I confirm that quotations from the interview can be used in the final research (PhD thesis) and other publications. I understand that these will be used anonymously and that no individual respondent will be identified in these publications.		
Signature:	Date:	
Name in block letters, please:		

Appendix G: Previous campaign work

I have worked within the subfield of responsible fashion for approximately nine years. In 2010, Social Alterations organised an online campaign designed to draw attention to garment worker grievances from Bangladesh, which we had, at the time, determined were receiving insufficient media coverage (Hanlon and Lamrad, 2010). In the campaign, we asked readers to send us a photo of themselves holding a piece

of paper with a message for the workers, and for stakeholders at large. We collected the photos after some time and sent an open letter to the International Labour Organisation, through their office in Bangladesh and their Global Campaign ‘Decent Work for All’, the Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Ministry of Labour and Employment:

The meagre coverage of the garment worker protests during the summer of this year was deficient in context and content. Awareness of the situation is almost non-existent, and consequently, protesting workers were left wondering whether anyone heard their pleas for change. We want to see a positive change! From this desire emerged The Bangladesh Project through the SA // Visual Lab with two overarching goals:

- increase awareness of the situation faced by Bangladeshi garment workers
- empower workers with a simple statement that we see you; you are not alone.

To date, we have collected nearly 50 visual messages from individuals all over the world. These messages are attached to this letter of solidarity and each one holds a sincere and hopeful rejection of the status quo. Social Alterations is not in the business of campaigning unless we feel very strongly about a particular issue. This is one of those situations. It is shameful that we allow the people who make our clothes to live in poverty.

Excerpt from campaign letter, sent 1 November 2010

Most of the images we collected came from immediate friends and family. We never did hear back from these stakeholders.

Nadira and I designed Social Alterations to encourage and assist fashion industry stakeholders—primarily fashion, apparel and textile design educators and students—to (a) increase classroom learning and (b) knowledge exchange on subjects related to the social and environmental consequences associated with the fashion industry at large. As we understood it at the time, delivering lesson plans and study guides online meant researchers, educators and learners could access content no matter where they were located – whether their university or college supported responsible fashion education or not. Packaging the content into classroom-ready formats meant researchers could pick up content immediately, and educators could download

material to embed directly into their current curricula. This, we hoped, would motivate emerging stakeholders to undertake independent research and study.

As project founder, I write and publish the majority of content on the website, and coordinate its dissemination through social media networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. That the project lived online was also significant. Social Alterations was born through online collaboration. Apart from the countless emails and Skype calls since we began working together in 2009, we have only ever met in person twice.

Appendix H: Lyrics of Shopping Bag, written by Worthy Skirmishes²⁶

Chorus

Bridge: Two parts, sung in unison

²⁶ Funds raised by the sale of this track were donated to Labour Behind the Label (LBL) (Tually, 2014).

Birds in a cage who long for a tree

Birds in a cage who're sewing for me

Open the door, let them fly free

Fly, free like shopping bags

Verse 1

This dress that I'm wearing comes from
a place

Built and designed with efficiency

And the women they sit, in long endless
lines

They stitch and they sew, for hours and
hours

Start before dawn, and walk from their
homes

Built out of clay and ephemeral

Yet emerge from these holes, dressed as
if queens

Fit for royalty

Chorus Repeats

Verse 2

When I was younger and I first got a job

I took my first pay check and I went to
the shops

To buy something bright to wear out at
night

Part One

Sitting and sewing, oh the tying and
bowing, lacking in vision or quality

For shipment that's going far overseas
for us Westerners, our shopping bags

Autumn is here the leaves are all
turning brown, brown, brown, on the
trees

They will die, die, die, die, in the trees,
they'll die, die, die on the trees.

Birds in a cage long for a tree

Birds in a cage sewing for me

Open the door, let them fly free

Fly, free like shopping bags

Part Two

Autumn is here the leaves are all
turning brown, brown, brown

They will die, die, die, die, on the trees,
they'll die, die, die on the trees

Looking back now, those times were
amazing

We all grew up with the shipments
arriving

My life was unfolding in discounted
clothing

Always made, in somewhere else

Autumn is here the leaves are all
turning brown, brown, brown

They will die, die, die, die, on the trees,
they'll die, die, die on the trees

And show the world I was a bird taking
flight

Perched at the bar, the fabric surrounds
me

I want to believe that its newness
defines me

To be something more than I have been
before

It was a price I was willing to pay

Chorus Repeats

Verse 4

This dress that I'm wearing comes from
a place

Built and designed for efficiency

And it was built by rich men who were
too quick to think

That cutting costs would benefit

The corners were cut, the concrete was
poured

The building was built by them anyway

So the women who died they paid with
their lives

For our shopping bags, our shopping
bags

Chorus Repeats

Appendix I: Changes and growth of the FashRev Global Advisory Committee between 2014/2015 and 2015/2016

FashRev Organisational Structure:
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2014/2015 – 2015/2016 ²⁷	
2014/2015	2015/2016
Global Advisory Committee (GAC)	
<p>1. Christopher Stalker: Consultant to Co-ordination Team, specialising in campaigns and advocacy related to poverty and human rights;</p> <p>2. Sandy Black: Designer, researcher, author, Professor of Fashion & Textile Design & Technology at the Centre for Sustainable Fashion (CSF) at London College of Fashion (LCF), University of the Arts London (UAL);</p> <p>3. Becky Earley: Researcher, consultant, designer, Professor of Sustainable Textile and Fashion Design at UAL and Director of Textile Futures Research Centre (TFRC) at Central Saint Martins (CSM) and Textiles Environment Design (TED) at Chelsea in UAL;</p> <p>4. Livia Firth: Creative Director of responsible fashion consultancy, Eco Age Ltd., Oxfam Global Ambassador;</p> <p>5. John-Paul Flintoff: Author and performer;</p> <p>6. Christine Gent: Director at the World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO) Asia;</p> <p>7. Amisha Ghadiali: Presenter, writer and entrepreneur;</p> <p>8. Jules Hau: Responsible fashion brand development;</p>	<p>1. Heinz Werner Engle: Consultant in environmental and ethical business, coach and adult learning facilitator;</p> <p>2. Baroness Lola Young of Hornsey: See #26 in 2014/2015 column (left);</p> <p>3. Nikki Mattei: Part of the FashRev Global Education and Resource Team, freelance marketing focused on ethical marketing;</p> <p>4. Nawshin Khair: FashRev Country Coordinator for Bangladesh in 2015/2016, fashion designer of Fairtrade products, media and communication in Bangladesh;</p> <p>5. Sandy Black: See #2 in 2014/2015 column (left);</p> <p>6. Christine Gent: See #6 in 2014/2015 column (left);</p> <p>7. Marina Spadafora: FashRev Country Coordinator for Italy in 2014/2015 and 2015/2016, responsible fashion designer, Creative Director at Auteurs Du Monde, a collective of fashion companies producing under WFTO standards;</p>

²⁷ 2014/2015 data retrieved 5 January 2015; 2015/2016 data retrieved 25 June 2016.

<p>9. Zoe Hitchen: Associate Lecturer at LCF, UAL;</p> <p>10. Clare Lissaman: Consultant on fair-trade;</p> <p>11. Safia Minney: Founder, People Tree, a responsible fashion company, author;</p> <p>12. Ayesha Mustafa: Founder of Fashion ComPassion, an online responsible fashion and apparel retailer;</p> <p>13. Mo Tomaney: Subject Leader, Post Graduate Fashion and Business at University for the Creative Arts (UCA);</p> <p>14. Willie Walters: Programme Director of Fashion at CSM, UAL;</p> <p>15. Dilys Williams: Director, CSF and fashion designer, Professor and Fellow at the Royal Society of the Arts (RSA);</p> <p>16. Rachel Wilshaw: Ethical Trade Manager, Oxfam GB;</p> <p>17. Maher Anjum: Leader at Oitij-jo and consultant on creative engagement and business and production in Bangladesh;</p> <p>18. Ian Cook: Associate Professor of Geography, University of Exeter and Founder of Follow the Things;</p> <p>19. Leona Everitt: Former public relations at Oxfam;</p> <p>20. Kate Fletcher: Researcher, author, consultant, Professor at LCF;</p> <p>21. Lynne Franks: Seed and B.Hive;</p> <p>22. Lord Peter Melchett: Soil Association;</p>	<p>8. Clare Lissaman: See #10 in 2014/2015 column (left);</p> <p>9. Mo Tomaney: See #13 in 2014/2015 column (left);</p> <p>10. Willie Walters: See #14 in 2014/2015 column (left);</p> <p>11. Dilys Williams: See #15 in 2014/2015 column (left);</p> <p>12. Alice Wilby: See #28 in 2014/2015 column (left);</p> <p>13. Melinda Tually: 2014/2015 FashRev Country Coordinator for Australia, Deputy Director of Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand;</p> <p>14. Pablo Galaz Esquivet: FashRev Country Coordinator for Chile, communications professional working in Human Rights, sustainability and business.</p> <p>15. Safia Minney: See #11 in 2014/2015 column;</p> <p>16. Tammy Nicol: 2014/2015-2015/2016 FashRev Country Coordinator for South Africa, a specialist in media and communications, research and lifestyle production;</p> <p>17. Maxine Bédât: 2015/2016 FashRev Country Coordinator for the US, Co-Founder of Zady, an online responsible fashion and apparel retailer</p>
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<p>23. Katherine Ross: Action Against Hunger;</p> <p>24. Lucy Siegle: Author and journalist at The Observer;</p> <p>25. Maria Chenoweth-Casey: Chief Executive at Textile Recycling for Aid and International Development (TRAID);</p> <p>26. Baroness Lola Young of Hornsey: House of Lords, and Professor</p> <p>27. Tamsin Blanchard: Journalist, The Telegraph;</p> <p>28. Alice Wilby: Stylist, marketing manager, responsible fashion editor.</p> <p>29. Neil Brown: Investment Manager, Alliance Trust;</p> <p>30. Henry Simonds: Saatchi & Saatchi;</p> <p>31. Tamsin Lejeune: Founder and Managing Director of the Ethical Fashion Forum (EFF);</p> <p>32. Yamin Khatun: Journalist; documentary film-maker</p>	
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Appendix J: Changes and growth of the FashRev Global Coordination Team between 2014/2015 and 2015/2016

FashRev Organisational Structure: 2014/2015 – 2015/2016 ²⁸	
2014/2015	2015/2016
Global Coordination Team ²⁹	
<p>1. Carry Somers FashRev Founder, Founder of Pachacuti, a Fairtrade hat company</p> <p>2. Orsola de Castro FashRev Co-Founder, Founder of Somewhere; associate lecturer at University of the Arts London (UAL);</p> <p>3. Martine Parry Public relations at the Fairtrade Foundation;</p> <p>4. Ben Ramsden Managing Director of the responsible fashion and apparel company Pants to Poverty</p> <p>5. Jocelyn Whipple Responsible fashion brand promotion, sales and development</p> <p>6. Sarah Ditty Editor-in-Chief of SOURCE Intelligence; researcher; writer; strategist</p>	<p>1. Carry Somers FashRev Founder and Director. See #1 in 2014/2015 column (left);</p> <p>2. Orsola de Castro FashRev Founder and Director. See #2 in 2014/2015 column (left);</p> <p>3. Dr Jen Ballie FashRev Scottish Regional Coordinator, designer and researcher of ‘fashion activism’;</p> <p>4. Jocelyn Whipple See #5 in 2014/2015 column (left);</p> <p>5. Lucy Shea: See #7 in 2014/2015 column (left);</p> <p>6: Heather Knight designer at Futtera</p> <p>7. Sarah Ditty See #6 in 2014/2015 column (left);</p> <p>8. Martine Perry See #3 in 2014/2015 column (left);</p> <p>9. Ian Cook See #18 in 2014/2015 column, Table 2 (below);</p>

²⁸ 2014/2015 data retrieved 5 January 2015; 2015/2016 data retrieved 25 June 2016.

²⁹ The Global Coordination Team (GCT) is also the UK Country Team.

<p>7. Lucy Shea CEO of Futerra, brand marketing and communications</p>	<p>10. Roxanna Houshmand Founder of The Right Project, working in talent and band management for various clients;</p> <p>11. Nikki Mattei FashRev GAC, 2015/2016, see #3 in 2015/2016 column, Table 2 (below);</p> <p>12: Niki Taylor: FashRev Scottish Regional Team, designer and Founder at The Top Project, responsible fashion design online store;</p> <p>13. Annalisa Simonella: FashRev Scottish Regional Team, Italian designer and Founder of allenomis, a design studio</p>
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Appendix K: Fashion Revolution Home Page

Legend // Page name in **yellow**; FR text in **blue**, hyperlinked FR text in **bold blue**;

hyperlinks in **red**.

Fashion Revolution (FR) Website **Home Page**: A long, vertical webpage, divided into five separate sections, with content (both visual and written text) hyperlinked to internal FR website pages (pages owned and managed by FR) and external websites pages (webpages owned by a company/organisation other than FR).

[Home Page] Header Image: Screenshot]



[Home Page] Header Text]

24.04.14 FASHION REVOLUTION WHO MADE YOUR CLOTHES?
#INSIDEOUT

[Home Page] Navigation Image: Screenshot]

[Home Page Navigation and Dropdown Menu Text]

User scrolls down the page to reach Section 1, and a homepage navigation and dropdown menu appears:

FASHION REVOLUTION <http://fashionrevolution.org/>

SEARCH (no hyperlink, this is a search tool function for the FR website)

SUPPORT US <http://fashionrevolution.org/support-us/>

Twitter (social media button) https://twitter.com/fash_rev

Facebook (social media button) <https://www.facebook.com/fashionrevolution.org>

Pinterest (social media button) <http://www.pinterest.com/fashrevglobal/>

Instagram (social media button) http://instagram.com/fash_rev

ABOUT <http://fashionrevolution.org/about/mission/>

Dropdown menu options listed under ‘ABOUT’:

WHY DO WE NEED A FASHION REVOLUTION?

<http://fashionrevolution.org/about/why-do-we-need-a-fashion-revolution/>

MISSION <http://fashionrevolution.org/about/mission/>

TRANSPARENCY <http://fashionrevolution.org/about/transparency/>

GLOBAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

<http://fashionrevolution.org/about/global-advisory-committee/>

GET INVOLVED <http://fashionrevolution.org/get-involved/>

Dropdown menu options listed under ‘GET INVOLVED’:

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED <http://fashionrevolution.org/get-involved/ways-for-everyone-to-get-involved/>

BRANDS <http://fashionrevolution.org/brands/>

RETAILERS <http://fashionrevolution.org/get-involved/retailers/>

FARMERS PRODUCERS AND FACTORIES

<http://fashionrevolution.org/farmers-producers-factories/>

EVENTS <http://fashionrevolution.org/get-involved/countries/>

BLOG <http://fashionrevolution.org/journal/>

Dropdown menu options listed under ‘BLOG’:

BLOG <http://fashionrevolution.org/journal/>

MEET YOUR MAKER <http://fashionrevolution.org/category/meet-your-maker/>

RESOURCES <http://fashionrevolution.org/resources/>

Dropdown menu options listed under ‘RESOURCES’:

PRESS <http://fashionrevolution.org/resources/press/>

EDUCATION <http://fashionrevolution.org/resources/education/>

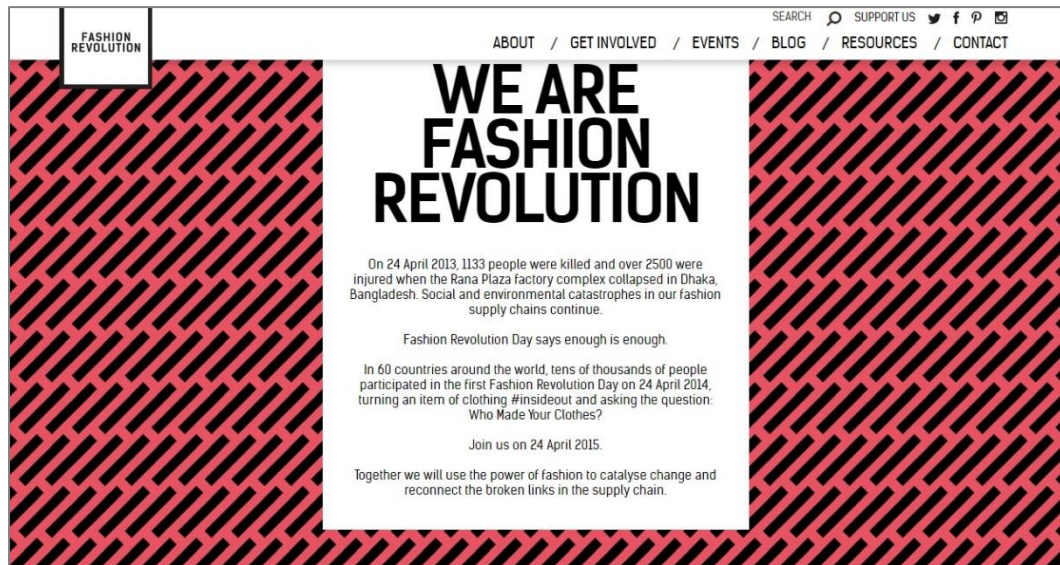
BRAND GUIDELINES AND ASSETS

<http://fashionrevolution.org/resources/brand-guidelines-and-assets/>

FURTHER READING <http://fashionrevolution.org/resources/further-reading/>

CONTACT <http://fashionrevolution.org/contact/>

[Home Page] Section 1 Image: Screenshot]



[Home Page] Section 1 Text]

WE ARE

FASHION

REVOLUTION

On 24 April 2013, 1133 people were killed and over 2500 were injured when the Rana Plaza factory complex collapsed in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Social and environmental catastrophes in our fashion supply chains continue.

Fashion Revolution Day says enough is enough.

In 60 countries around the world, tens of thousands of people participated in the first Fashion Revolution Day on 24 April 2014, turning an item of clothing #insideout and asking the question: Who Made Your Clothes?

Join us on 24 April 2015.

Together we will use the power of fashion to catalyse change and reconnect the broken links in the supply chain.

[Home Page Section 2 Image: Screenshot]



[Home Page Section 2 Text]

Who made your clothes?

Be curious. Find out who made your clothes — from who spun the threads, to who sewed them together, to who grew the cotton in the first place.

Your clothes already tell a story about who you are.

Now they can tell a better one.

BE CURIOUS

Why do we need a fashion revolution?*

<http://fashionrevolution.org/about/why-do-we-need-a-fashion-revolution/>

FIND OUT

Who made your clothes?*

<http://fashionrevolution.org/get-involved/>

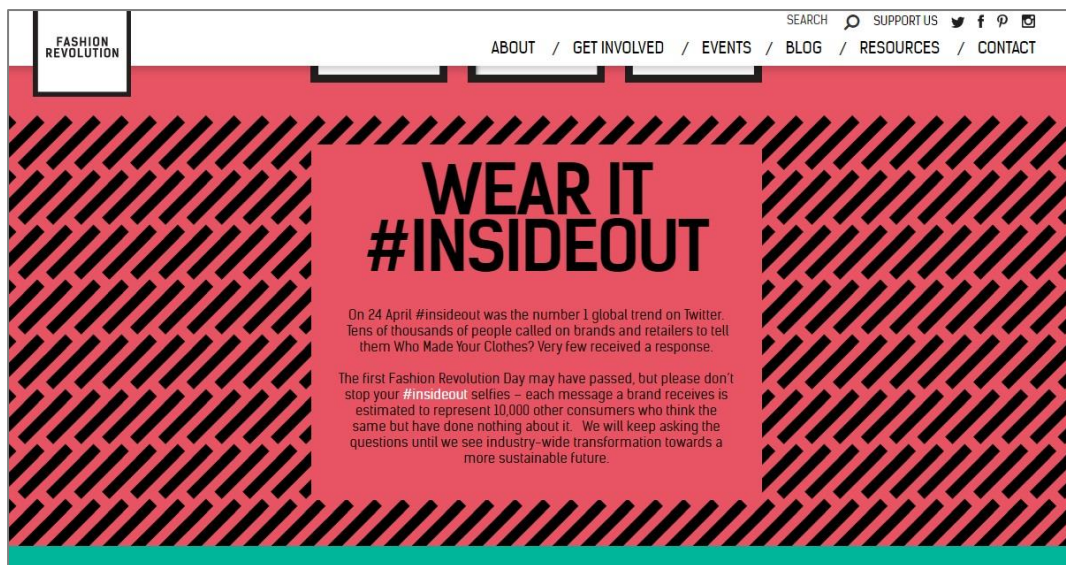
DO SOMETHING

Wear it inside out*

<http://fashionrevolution.org/#>

*This text appears when the user scrolls over image, ahead of clicking for the hyperlink

[Home Page] Section 3 Image: Screenshot]



[Home Page] Section 3 Text]

WEAR IT

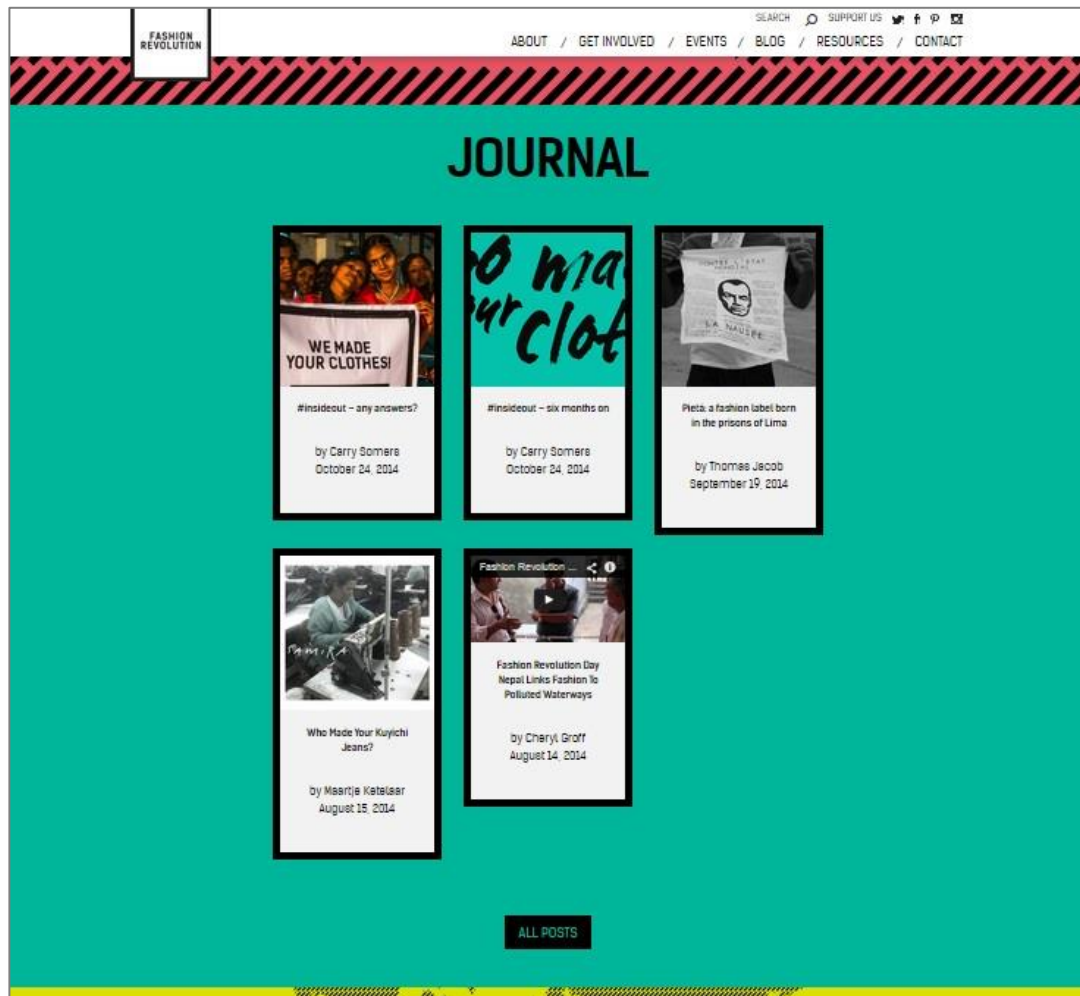
#INSIDEOUT

On 24 April #insideout was the number 1 global trend on Twitter. Tens of thousands of people called on brands and retailers to tell them Who Made Your Clothes? Very few received a response.

The first Fashion Revolution Day may have passed, but please don't stop your #insideout <http://iconosquare.com/tag/insideout/> selfies – each message a brand receives is estimated to represent 10,000 other consumers who think the same but

have done nothing about it. We will keep asking the questions until we see industry-wide transformation towards a more sustainable future.

[Home Page Section 4 Image: Screenshot]



[Home Page Section 4 Text]

This section on the homepage has links to FR's most recent blog posts. These are also available in the blog (journal) section. At this time (10 Nov 2014) there are five blog posts showing (and linked) on the homepage, with a user option to click

on 'ALL POSTS' and be taken to the blog section:

<http://fashionrevolution.org/journal/>

#INSIDEOUT – ANY ANSWERS?

<http://fashionrevolution.org/insideout-any-answers/>

#INSIDEOUT – SIX MONTHS ON

<http://fashionrevolution.org/insideout-six-months-on/>

PIETÀ: A FASHION LABEL BORN IN THE PRISONS OF LIMA

<http://fashionrevolution.org/pieta-a-fashion-label-born-in-the-prisons-of-lima/>

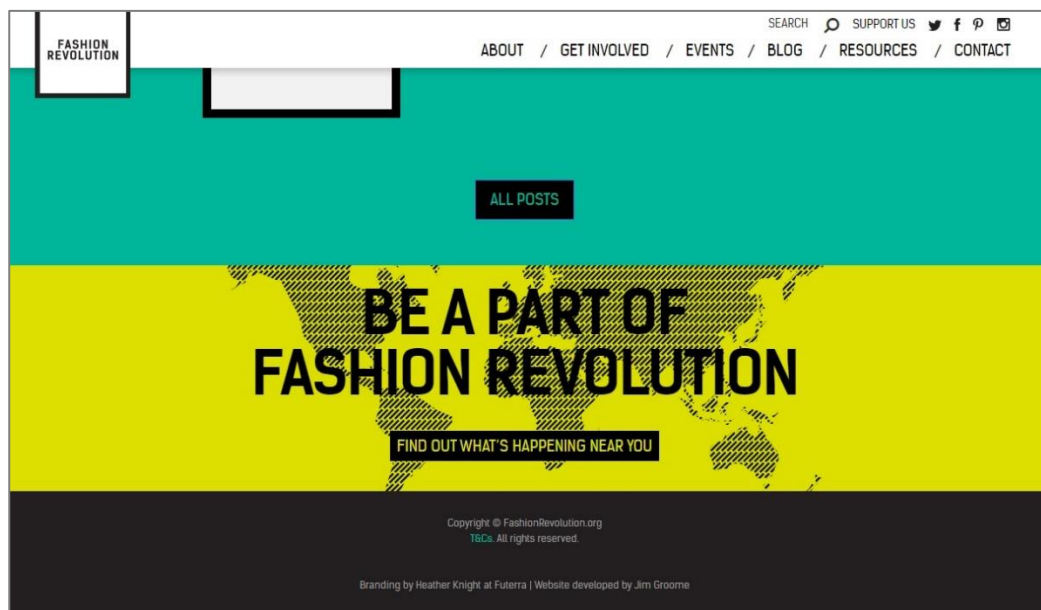
WHO MADE YOUR KUYICHI JEANS?

<http://fashionrevolution.org/who-made-your-kuyichi-jeans/>

**FASHION REVOLUTION DAY NEPAL LINKS FASHION TO
POLLUTED WATERWAYS**

<http://fashionrevolution.org/fashion-revolution-day-nepal-links-fashion-to-polluted-waterways/>

[Home Page Section 5 Image: Screenshot]



[Home Page Section 5 Text]

BE A PART OF
FASHION REVOLUTION

FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING NEAR YOU

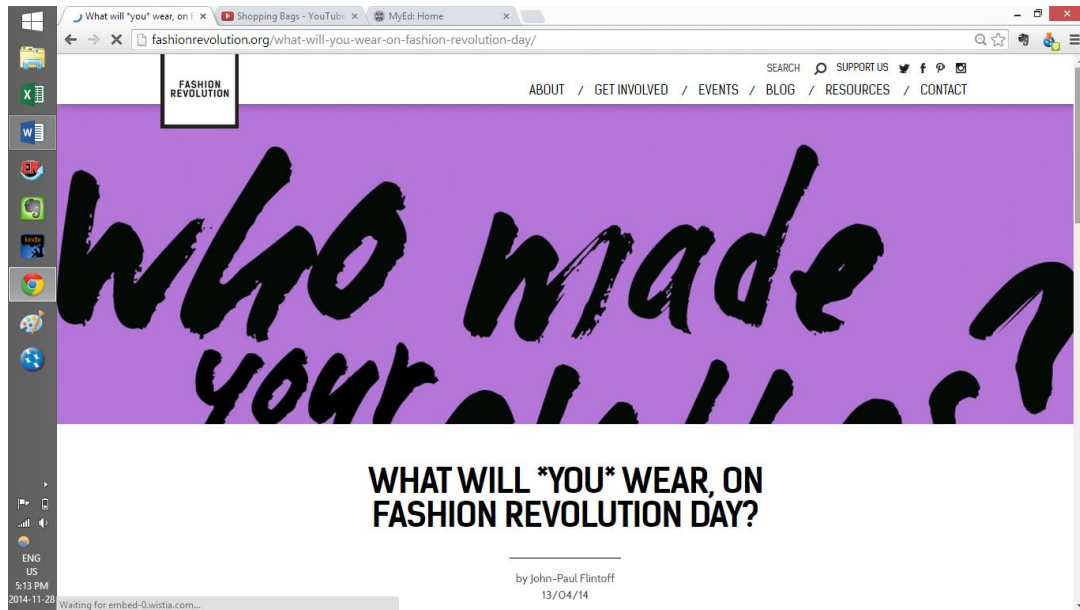
<http://fashionrevolution.org/get-involved/countries/>

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Branding by Heather Knight at Futerra | Website developed by Jim Groome

Appendix L: Fashion Revolution: Interview with Luke Swanson



WHAT WILL *YOU* WEAR, ON FASHION REVOLUTION DAY?

by John-Paul Flintoff

13/04/14

Fashion Revolution Day is getting closer, and together with many other people I made this film to explain what it's all about. Please watch, and please share.

Why share? One of the advisers closely connected to the Fashion Revolution Day campaign is a banker who deals with ethical investment funds. He told us very clearly: if we get lots of social media support we can harvest that data and prove to manufacturers that there is an appetite for change.

As well as sharing, please also turn a garment #insideout, take a photo, and send it to the manufacturer, asking what they know about the people who made it. Do it on Fashion Revolution Day – but you don't have to wait till then – or if you missed it, you can still do it now.

It all helps.

Please also watch these short films showing more from my interviews with some of the contributors to our film:

Carry Somers, co-founder of Fashion Revolution Day, on FRD's global reach

Luke Swanson, FRD coordinator in Bangladesh, on seeing makers as artisans, not victims

Videos

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Appendix M: Fashion Revolution website data collection details

#	Type	Title	1st data collection pull	2nd data collection pull
1	Static page	About Page	1-03-15	Not applicable
2	Static page	BRANDS	1-03-15	Not applicable
3	Static page	CONTACT	1-08-15	Not applicable
4	Static page	EDUCATION	1-06-15	Not applicable
5	Static page	EVENTS, by Country	1-09-15	2016-06-25
6	Static page	FARMERS, PRODUCERS AND FACTORIES	1-05-15	Not applicable
7	Static page	FURTHER READING	1-08-15	Not applicable
8	Static page	GET INVOLVED	1-03-15	Not applicable
9	Static page	GLOBAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE	1-03-15	2016-06-25
10	Static page	MISSION	1-03-15	Not applicable
11	Static page	PRESS	1-06-15	Not applicable
12	Static page	RESOURCES	1-08-15	Not applicable

13	Static page	RETAILERS	1-03-15	Not applicable
14	Static page	SUPPORT US	1-08-15	Not applicable
15	Static page	TRANSPARENCY	1-03-15	Not applicable
16	Static page	WAYS TO GET INVOLVED	1-03-15	Not applicable
17	Static page	WHY DO WE NEED A FASHION REVOLUTION	1-03-15	Not applicable
18	Document	Celebrities-and-Fashionistas-Unite-for-Fashion-Revolution-Day2	1-06-15	Not applicable
19	Document	Fashion Revolution - FRD_GetInvolved_Brands - BRANDS - Retrieved 3 Jan 2015	1-03-15	Not applicable
20	Document	Fashion Revolution - FRD_GetInvolved_Everyone - EVERYONE - Retrieved 3 Jan 2015	1-03-15	Not applicable
21	Document	Fashion Revolution - FRD_GetInvolved_Producers - Producers - Retrieved 5 Jan 2015	1-05-15	Not applicable
22	Document	Fashion Revolution - FRD_GetInvolved_Retail - RETAIL - Retrieved 3 Jan 2015	1-03-15	Not applicable
23	Document	Fashion Revolution - Press Release 2014	1-06-15	Not applicable
24	Document	fashionrevolution_in_schools1	1-06-15	Not applicable
25	Document	Fashion-Revolution-Day-Made-in-Britain-release-FINAL2	1-06-15	Not applicable

26	Document	Fashion-Revolution-QA-with-Carry-Somers	1-06-15	Not applicable
27	Document	FRD_letter_to_educators1	1-06-15	Not applicable
28	Document	FRD_quiz1	1-06-15	Not applicable
29	Document	FRD_trumpcards_2015_A4_	1-06-15	Not applicable
30	Document	FRD2015_Brand_Guidelines	1-06-15	Not applicable
31	Document	frdtrumpgapcardsample	1-06-15	Not applicable
32	Blog post	01-02-14, PIXAN - THE TRUE SPIRIT OF FASHION	11-26-14	Not applicable
33	Blog post	01-04-14, PANTREPRENEURS VISIT INDIA	11-28-14	Not applicable
34	Blog post	01-04-14, UCA EPSOM MA FASHION	11-28-14	Not applicable
35	Blog post	06-04-14, BEXIMCO FACTORY	11-28-14	Not applicable
36	Blog post	06-04-14, FROM FACTORIES TO ACACIA TREES	11-28-14	Not applicable
37	Blog post	06-04-14, HANDMADE WATER	11-28-14	Not applicable
38	Blog post	06-04-14, SIBONGILE MASEKO	11-28-14	Not applicable
39	Blog post	06-04-14, WHO MADE YOUR CLOTHES	11-28-14	Not applicable
40	Blog post	06-04-14, WHO MADE YOUR HAT	11-28-14	Not applicable

41	Blog post	06-06-14, WHO MADE THE COTTON FOR YOUR CLOTHES	11-28-14	Not applicable
42	Blog post	06-06-14, WHO MADE YOUR CROWDFUNDING T	11-28-14	Not applicable
43	Blog post	07-04-14, JABU MDLOVU	11-28-14	Not applicable
44	Blog post	07-04-14, WHO MADE YOUR PANTS	11-28-14	Not applicable
45	Blog post	07-06-14, A VISIT TO AMAZONIAN RUBBER TAPPERS	11-28-14	Not applicable
46	Blog post	09-02-14, PAYING THE PRICE FOR PANTS	11-28-14	Not applicable
47	Blog post	10-04-14, WOW 2014	11-28-14	Not applicable
48	Blog post	10-07-14, BROWN KIMONGE	11-28-14	Not applicable
49	Blog post	10-07-14, THE STORY OF AFRICAN SEED COTTON	11-28-14	Not applicable
50	Blog post	11-03-14, 12 DAYS OF CONSCIOUS CONSUMERISM	11-28-14	Not applicable
51	Blog post	11-03-14, WHO MADE MY JIGSAW GREEN LABEL DRESS	11-28-14	Not applicable
52	Blog post	12-04-14, SHOPPING BAGS	11-28-14	Not applicable
53	Blog post	12-04-14, WHO MADE MY WHISTLES DRESS	11-28-14	Not applicable
54	Blog post	12-04-14, WHO MADE YOUR CLOTHES, FIONA CRICK	11-28-14	Not applicable

55	Blog post	12-04-14, WHO MADE YOUR CLOTHES	11-28-14	Not applicable
56	Blog post	13-04-14, INTERVIEW WITH CARRY SOMERS	11-28-14	Not applicable
57	Blog post	13-04-14, INTERVIEW WITH ORSOLA DE CASTRO	11-28-14	Not applicable
58	Blog post	13-04-14, WHAT WILL	11-28-14	Not applicable
59	Blog post	13-04-14, WHO MADE MY AUSTIN REED COAT	11-28-14	Not applicable
60	Blog post	13-05-14, GULU GINNERY	11-28-14	Not applicable
61	Blog post	14-05-14, MEET THE MAKER	11-28-14	Not applicable
62	Blog post	14-08-14, FASHION REVOLUTION DAY NEPAL LINKS FASHION TO POLLUTED WATERWAYS	11-28-14	Not applicable
63	Blog post	14-08-14, MEET DESIGNER MAKER JULIE TRICKEY	11-28-14	Not applicable
64	Blog post	14-11-14, SECONDHANDFIRST WEEK 17	11-28-14	Not applicable
65	Blog post	15-04-14, GENERATION GENEROUS	11-28-14	Not applicable
66	Blog post	15-04-14, WHO MADE YOUR CLOTHES	11-28-14	Not applicable
67	Blog post	15-05-14, FASHION REVOLUTION LAUNCHES CROWDFUNDING	11-28-14	Not applicable
68	Blog post	15-08-14, WHO MADE YOUR KUYICHI JEANS	11-28-14	Not applicable

69	Blog post	16-04-14, PRODUCTION CHAINS	11-28-14	Not applicable
70	Blog post	17-04-14, SEW IT FORWARD ON FASHION REVOLUTION DAY	11-28-14	Not applicable
71	Blog post	17-04-14, THE LIFE OF A PANAMA HAT WEAVER	11-28-14	Not applicable
72	Blog post	17-06-14, MADE IN BRAZIL	11-28-14	Not applicable
73	Blog post	18-04-14, WHY WE NEED TO	11-28-14	Not applicable
74	Blog post	19-09-14, PIETÀ	11-28-14	Not applicable
75	Blog post	21-04-14, ARTESANIA SORATA	11-28-14	Not applicable
76	Blog post	21-04-14, JUANA	11-28-14	Not applicable
77	Blog post	21-07-14, MARGARET MSCHAI RISES ABOVE LIFE	11-28-14	Not applicable
78	Blog post	22-03-14, 6 SUSTAINABLE FASHION PROJECTS TO WATCH 2014	11-28-14	Not applicable
79	Blog post	22-03-14, 8 SUSTAINABLE FASHION EVENTS TO ATTEND IN 2014	11-28-14	Not applicable
80	Blog post	22-03-14, 11 INDIE DESIGNERS MAKING A MARK IN ETHICAL FASHION	11-28-14	Not applicable
81	Blog post	22-03-14, WHO MADE MY BODEN SHIRT	11-28-14	Not applicable
82	Blog post	22-03-14, WHY I INVEST IN ETHICAL FASHION	11-28-14	Not applicable

83	Blog post	22-04-14, DO SOMETHING	11-28-14	Not applicable
84	Blog post	22-04-14, FASHION REVOLUTION DAY SWAZILAND	11-28-14	Not applicable
85	Blog post	22-04-14, FELT MAKING	11-28-14	Not applicable
86	Blog post	22-04-14, I MADE YOUR HAT	11-28-14	Not applicable
87	Blog post	22-04-14, WHAT I'M DOING FOR FASHION REVOLUTION DAY - TOLLY DOLLY POSH	11-28-14	Not applicable
88	Blog post	22-04-14, WHO IS TO BLAME	11-28-14	Not applicable
89	Blog post	22-04-14, WHO MADE OUR CLOTHES	11-28-14	Not applicable
90	Blog post	22-07-14, DANIEL MUNYAO	11-28-14	Not applicable
91	Blog post	23-04-14, BANGLAFRESH FOR FASHION REVOLUTION DAY	11-28-14	Not applicable
92	Blog post	23-04-14, BASHA ENTERPRISES	11-28-14	Not applicable
93	Blog post	23-04-14, LCC ANIMATION FOR FASHION REVOLUTION DAY FASH MOB	11-28-14	Not applicable
94	Blog post	23-04-14, MEET YOUR MAKER	11-28-14	Not applicable
95	Blog post	23-04-14, THE WORLD IN OUR WARDROBE	11-28-14	Not applicable
96	Blog post	23-04-14, WHO MADE YOUR CLOTHES	11-28-14	Not applicable

97	Blog post	23-04-14, WHY SHOP WHEN YOU CAN SWAP	11-28-14	Not applicable
98	Blog post	24-03-14, HOW PEOPLE POWER IS SHAKING UP THE FASHION SECTOR	11-28-14	Not applicable
99	Blog post	24-04-14, MADE IN CHINA	11-28-14	Not applicable
100	Blog post	24-04-14, MEET YOUR MAKER - Artur and Henry	11-28-14	Not applicable
101	Blog post	24-04-14, MEET YOUR MAKER	11-28-14	Not applicable
102	Blog post	24-04-14, MEET YOUR MAKER-HTHT	11-28-14	Not applicable
103	Blog post	24-06-14, TAP FOR TRAINERS	11-28-14	Not applicable
104	Blog post	24-06-14, WHO MADE YOUR BOTTLETOP BAG	11-28-14	Not applicable
105	Blog post	24-10-14, INSIDEOUT	11-28-14	Not applicable
106	Blog post	24-10-14, INSIDEOUT2	11-28-14	Not applicable
107	Blog post	28-05-14, RAGWEAR TELLS CUSTOMERS WHO MADE THEIR CLOTHES	11-28-14	Not applicable
108	Blog post	29-03-14, A BETTER FASHION IS POSSIBLE	11-28-14	Not applicable
109	Blog post	30-05-14, WHO MADE YOUR KHAMA BAG	11-28-14	Not applicable
110	Blog post	01-01-14, A REVOLUTION BEGINS	11-26-14	Not applicable

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